

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Revelation Chapter 13

Bible Study Notes on The Two Beasts

Revelation Chapter 13

What is the nature of Chapter 13?

- Chapter 13 is a parenthetical chapter – a break from the narrative of the tribulation, it is an overview, like Chapter 12
 - Chapter 13 focuses key characters whose head is the dragon (Satan) and their activities in the tribulation period
 - There is a particular focus on the second half of the tribulation – the part named by Yeshua as the ‘great tribulation’ – when Satan and his angels have been cast to the earth and the anti-Christ spirit is dominant on the earth

Who are the Key Characters in Chapter 13?

- The ‘Seed of the Serpent’ (*Genesis 3: 15*)
 - The Dragon – Satan (see Chapter 12)) A
 - The Beast from the Sea – the Coming World Leader) Satanic
 - The Beast from the Earth – the False Prophet) Trinity
 - They are a false Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- The Dragon
 - Satan
 - The ‘serpent of old’ – see Chapter 12
 - It is he from whom the two beasts derive their power
- The Beast from the Sea
 - The Coming World Leader
 - A false messiah
 - Often called ‘the Antichrist’
- The Beast from the Earth
 - The False Prophet
 - Exercises the authority of the Beast from the Sea
 - Causes earth dwellers to worship the Beast from the Sea

Ch 13 Vs 1 – 10

The Beast from the Sea

His Identity and Authority

Verses 1 – 4

Where is John?

Verse 1

- By the Sea
 - Yet again John is being transported by the Lord to witness key events – he is being given a ringside seat / the front stalls

- Most manuscripts read "And he stood" ... possibly referring to the dragon, or Satan from Chapter 12 (as in ASV, LSB, NIV, RV)
 - The Legacy Standard Bible translates *verse 1* as “And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea...”
 - He (the dragon) takes a position in the midst of the nations of his world, as represented by ‘the sand of the sea’
- Other manuscripts read “I stood on the sand of the sea” indicating it is John who is stood on the seashore (as in AMPC, CJB, Darby, KJV, LITV, NKJV, YLT)
 - Clearly there is a presence of the dragon in some way (verse 2) – but it may be it is indeed John stood on the seashore
- But it is plainly John who is the witness to all that this chapter tells us – he sees it with his own eyes “and (then) I saw...” (verse 1)

Who does John See and what is the Significance of his Origin? Verse 1

- A Beast (Greek: *thērion*) – a beast of prey, a wild beast - which describes a vicious, killing animal...as distinct from the four ‘beasts (‘living creatures’) in *Revelation chapters 4 & 6* (Greek: *zoon*)
- Arising out of the Sea
 - Scripture uses ‘the sea’ as an idiom for the nations (in contrast to the Jews) - see *Isaiah 17: 12, 57: 20-21; Jeremiah 6: 23; Revelation 17: 15*
 - Beasts and the Sea are linked in Daniel (see *Daniel 7: 2-3*) – the four beasts that Daniel saw were Gentile empires
 - Each of these empires treated people in a beastly and harsh manner, ruling brutally
 - In this context, the term represents both a person (Antichrist) and his system (the world)
 - The final satanic world empire will be inseparable from the demonic man who leads it
 - Because this beast arises out of the sea (the nations) – many commentators therefore say that this ‘beast’ is a Gentile

See Supplementary Note 35: ‘The Ethnicity of the Antichrist’

What does John first notice about this Beast and what is the Significance? Verse 1

- The Beast has Seven Heads and Ten Horns with Ten Crowns
 - Like the Red Dragon (*Revelation 12: 3*)
 - This Beast gets his power from the Dragon (*verse 2*)
 - The seven heads may represent successive world empires – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome I, and Rome II (the final kingdom of Antichrist)
 - The final one is made up of all the kingdoms represented by the horns (see *Revelation 17: 9-13*)
 - The Horns - Ten is a number that symbolizes the totality of human military and political power assisting the beast (Antichrist) as he controls the world

- Horns always represent power, as in the animal kingdom – both offensive power (attack) and defensive power (protection)
- In Daniel's vision of the four beasts (in *Daniel 7*) he sees the fourth beast (the most terrifying one of all) as having ten horns (see *Daniel 7: 7*) – they are 10 kingdoms/kings who form the empire, as in the Roman Empire
- Daniel sees that the end-time Antichrist (the 'little horn' rising in the midst of the 10 horns) will rise up from these ten kings (see *Daniel 7: 8, 16 – 25*)
- John picks up the numerical imagery of *Daniel 2: 41 – 42*, which refers to the ten toes (kingdoms) on the statue's clay and iron feet
- John sees the beast as the final world government – the anti-Christ, anti-God coalition – headed by a revived Roman Empire, having the strengths of various world powers, yet mixed with weakness and ultimately crushed (see *Daniel 2: 32-45; Revelation 19: 19-25*)
- A Blasphemous Name on his heads
 - Throughout history, every time a monarch has identified himself as a god, he has blasphemed the true God
 - Each ruler who contributes to the beast's final coalition has an identity, wears a crown, exerts dominion and power, and, therefore, blasphemes God
 - The blasphemous nature of the Beast from the Sea was foreseen by Daniel in his vision of the fourth beast (see *Daniel 7: 23 – 25*) and the vision of the 70th Week (see *Daniel 9: 27*)
- Crowns (Greek: *diadema*) are the crowns of a ruler
 - Contrasting with the crown of a victor (Greek: *stephanos*)
 - One crown on each horn – indicating ten kingdoms

How does John describe the Characteristics of this Beast? Verse 2

- Like a Leopard
 - A metaphor for ancient Greece, alluding to the Greeks' swiftness and agility as their military moved forward in conquest, particularly under Alexander the Great (see *Daniel 7: 6*) – the third beast in *Daniel 7*
- Feet like the feet of a Bear
 - A metaphor for the ancient Medo-Persian Empire, depicting that kingdom's ferocious strength, combined with its great stability (see *Daniel 7: 5*) – the second beast in *Daniel 7*
- Mouth like the mouth of a Lion
 - A metaphor for the ancient Babylonian Empire, referring to the Babylonians' fierce, all-consuming power as they extended their domain (see *Daniel 7: 4*) – the first beast in *Daniel 7*
- This beast carries the personifications of the four beasts in the vision of Daniel in *Daniel 7* (but in *Revelation 13* in reverse order...looking back)
 - First beast like a lion with eagles wings (*Daniel 7: 4*)
 - Symbolically the Babylonian Empire
 - The lion communicates arrogantly (roaring)
 - The feature John sees of the lion is its mouth

- Second beast like a bear (*Daniel 7: 5*)
 - Symbolically the Medo-Persian Empire
 - The bear controls extensively (powerful)...trampling others
 - The feature John sees of the bear is its feet
- Third beast like a leopard (*Daniel 7: 6*)
 - Symbolically the Greek Empire
 - The leopard conquers swiftly (within thirteen years Alexander conquered the world, marching as far east as India)
- Fourth beast dreadful and terrible – having ten horns
 - Symbolically the Roman Empire (Rome I)
 - This empire was not conquered, but broke up into nations and groups of nations
 - This beast is powerful and destructive – different from the others but with some of their bestial characteristics
 - The Roman Empire would cease, but not be conquered like the previous empires, it would be innate in the nations which would have its characteristics, as well as some of those of the previous empires
- After a considerable space of time, the Roman Empire is revived (Rome II)
 - It is in this revived form that it will have ten horns, that is, ten kings, and a little horn, i.e., the future head of the revived Roman Empire – the Antichrist
- The Coming World Leader is the last of a succession of secular rulers and his kingdom will be the last before Yeshua's return
 - The revived Roman Empire thus resembles its predecessors in that it is swift to conquer like **a leopard**, powerful as **a bear**, and ferocious and greedy as **a lion**
 - In short, it combines all the evil features of the preceding world empires – Rome I was such at the time of Yeshua's first coming, and Rome II, the revived Roman empire, will be so in the end times before Yeshua's second coming
- The Beast from the Sea thus relates to a revived Roman Empire
 - It combines all the attributes of the previous kingdoms
 - The revived Roman Empire thus resembles its predecessors in that it is swift to conquer like **a leopard**, powerful as **a bear**, and ferocious and greedy as **a lion**
 - This Beast combines all the evil features of the preceding world empires
 - The Beast speaks pompous words (blasphemies) like the 4th beast in Daniel 7 (see *Daniel 7: 8*)

How does the Beast exercise his rule and dominance? Verse 2

- The Beast from the Sea, the empire and its ruler, receive supernatural strength from the Dragon
 - The Dragon is identified in *Revelation 12: 9*
 - That old serpent (an allusion to the Garden of Eden)
 - Called The Devil (Greek: *diabolos*) meaning false accuser, slanderer
 - Called Satan (Greek: *Satanas*) meaning accuser, adversary (enemy)
 - He deceives the whole world - throughout human history he has deceived mankind, and will do so during the Tribulation, and again at the end of the Millennium when released from the bottomless pit

- The Dragon gives to the Beast from the Sea (*verse 2*):
 - His power (Greek: *dunamis*) – both worldly and supernatural (miraculous)...lying signs and wonders (*2 Thessalonians 2: 9*)
 - His throne (Greek: *thronos*) – seat of power and authority – Satan’s throne (see *Revelation 2: 13*) – possibly the Papal throne in Rome
 - Great Authority (Greek: *meas exousia*) – authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength
- This Beast is an end-time world ruler – all-powerful
- This Beast is demonic – he comes from the bottomless pit (the place of demons)
 - He will be a demon in human form
 - He is responsible for killing the Two Witnesses (see *Revelation 11: 7*)
 - He is the beast who was, is not, and yet is – speaking of a false death and resurrection (see *Revelation 17: 8*)
 - He is a False Christ – compare *Revelation 17: 8* and *1: 8* – as identified by a mortal wound on one the beast’s heads (*Revelation 13: 3*)
 - He is the beast who ascends out of the bottomless pit – the place of demons (see *Revelation 17: 8*)
 - His end is ‘perdition’ (Greek: *apōleia*) meaning ruin or loss (*Revelation 17: 8*) – he will be cast into the Lake of Fire (see *Revelation 19: 20*)

How is the Beast from the Sea often named?

- Often called ‘The Antichrist’ (Greek: *antichristos*)
- ‘Antichrist’ means ‘opponent of the anointed one’ – ‘in the place of Christ’
 - A spiritual power or personality rather than a human identity
 - A spirit which is also an anti-type of the true Christ (a pseudo-Christ)
- Anti-Christ in scripture – the words appear only in the letters of John
 - *1 John 2: 18* His Hour
 - In the last hour the* Antichrist will come, says John
 - * note ‘the’ is not in the Greek text
 - Even now...many antichrists have come (Greek: *ginomia* – meaning come to be) – indicating that this spiritual power is at work through the ages, and in every age
 - Hence, in scriptural terms, ‘antichrist’ is a spirit rather than a person
 - The Beast in Revelation 13 is the archetype and culmination of all that is ‘antichrist’, that is...of the antichrist spirit; therefore it may be more accurate to speak of the Beast as the Coming World Leader
 - *1 John 2: 22* The Character of ‘Antichrist’
 - Denies that Jesus is the Christ (‘anointed one’ – Messiah)
 - Denies the Father and the Son – denies the deity of Yeshua
 - *1 John 4: 3* The ‘spirit’ of Antichrist
 - Denies that Jesus has come in the flesh – denies the humanity of Yeshua
 - This spirit is already in the world (in the apostle John’s day)
 - *2 John 1: 7* A Deceiver
 - Denies that Jesus has come in the flesh – denies His humanity
 - Many deceivers have gone out into the world – many such deniers of Christ’s humanity, but all in one ‘spirit’ of antichrist

See Supplementary Note 50: ‘The Antichrist in Scripture’

What specific identifying physical characteristic does the Beast have? Verse 3

- Specific identifier – A Head Wound (see *verse 3*, and also *verses 12* and *14*)
 - A mortal wound which had been healed – on one of his seven heads
 - This implies he was wounded as if dead
 - His followers ‘wonder’ – it appears that he has returned from the dead
 - This is a counterfeit of Yeshua – see *John 20: 19-20; Revelation 5: 6*
 - The wound refers to a fake death and resurrection enacted by the Beast, as part of his lying deception – see Yeshua’s warning of end-times (*Matthew 24: 24*)
 - Some commentators interpret the head wound as a government or kingdom which is revived; others interpret it literally to the person of the ‘Beast from the Sea’; i.e. he will have a healed head wound
 - Both views may be right - however it seems clear from the later verses that this is referring to an individual
 - A wound from a sword (*verse 14*) – counterfeit of Yeshua (*John 19: 34*)
 - There is a similarity here to ‘the worthless (idol) shepherd’ – this may be a descriptor of the antichrist – see *Zechariah 11: 16-17*
 - The sword shall be upon his arm and his right eye
 - His arm shall be completely withered
 - His right eye shall be completely blinded
 - Hence, why the followers of this ‘Coming World Leader’ take a mark identifying with him on their hand or forehead
- The head wound seems, from the text of chapter 13, to be a major identifier of ‘the Beast from the Sea’
- Historical Relevance & Application
 - Fragments of the ancient Roman Empire have never ceased to exist as separate kingdoms
 - It was the imperial form of government which ceased; the one head wounded to death
 - The **deadly wound** is **healed** - in other words, the empire is revived with an emperor as head, namely, **the beast**

What is the reaction of the earth-dwellers? Verses 3b – 4

- All the world marvels at him (*verse 3b*) – all the world is in wonder and admiration
- This promotes worship of the Dragon (Satan) and the Beast (see *verses 4* and *12*)
 - Worship of the Dragon (Satan) ... because of the Beast from the Sea
 - The followers of the ‘Coming World Leader’ will be Satan worshippers – there are many such today:
 - Muslims worshipping Allah and Mohammed
 - Buddhists, Hindus, etc
 - Satanists and occult worshippers
 - There seems to be a worldwide recognition that Satan is the source of the power which the Beast from the Sea possesses

- People in the world will be astounded and fascinated by the Beast who appears to have risen from the dead
 - The Beast from the Sea beguiles the world with ‘all power, signs, and lying wonders’ (see *2 Thessalonians 2: 8-12*)
 - His charisma, brilliance, and attractive but deluding powers will cause the world to follow him unquestioningly
 - He is aided by the Beast from the Earth who promotes (causes) people to worship the Beast from the Sea (see *Revelation 13: 14*)
 - Those who follow the Beast will only be fooling themselves: He will use his power to manipulate others, to point to himself, and to promote evil plans
 - Our Father God, by contrast, uses his infinitely greater power to love and to build up and to promote righteousness

- Worshippers say:
 - ‘Who is like the beast’ (compare *Colossians 1: 15-17*)
 - ‘Who can make war with him’ - i.e. he is deemed to be indestructible and invincible
 - He arises initially as a peacemaker and solver of the world’s problems, but he becomes a military leader and reveals his true nature (see *Daniel 9: 27*)

His Power and Activity

Verses 5 – 8

What is the period of the Beast’s authority?

Verse 5

- He was given power to continue 42 months; i.e. the last 3½ years of the tribulation period – that part of the 7 year Tribulation [Daniel’s 70th week] called by Yeshua the time of ‘great tribulation’ (see *Matthew 24: 21*)
 - ‘Continue’ – the Beast has already been active for 42 months (the first half of the Tribulation period) – but his continuance in the second half is his ultimate evil purpose against Israel and Tribulation Saints...and the Lord
 - It seems that the Beast (the Coming World Leader) initially appears as a political problem solver, statesman and peacemaker (first 42 months)
 - The Tribulation period begins when the Coming World Leader confirms a covenant with ‘the many’ (that is, the Jewish people, Israel) – see *Daniel 9: 27*
 - After 3½ years, at the point where Satan is cast to the earth (see notes on Chapter 12), the Coming World Leader shows his true colours when he desecrates the Holy of Holies in the Tribulation Temple (*Daniel 9: 27*) – by the ‘abomination that desolates’ (see *Matthew 24: 15*)

What seems to be the Beast’s principal action?

Verses 5 and 6

- He was given a mouth speaking:
 - Great Things – good sounding words (like politician’s speeches) and proud boasts (like politicians!)
 - Blasphemies (Greek: *blasphēmia*) meaning *vilification* (especially against God), evil speaking with railing & rage

- He was ‘given’ – given by the dragon (Satan) from whom he gets his power, throne and authority (*verse 2*)

- The sovereign God will establish the limits within which the Beast will be allowed to speak and operate – but his speaking is through Satan’s demonic power and activity
- Blasphemies Against God – the great mark of the Beast from the Sea
 - Against God’s Name (character)
 - Against God’s tabernacle (His dwelling place where He is worshipped)
 - Against them that dwell in heaven (angels and saints)
 - There are many OT & NT references to the blasphemies of the antichrist – see *Daniel 7: 20 and 25; 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-4*

What other powers was the Beast given? Verse 7

- Power to make war with the saints – and to overcome them (a contrast with the church (*Matthew 16: 18*))
 - The saints concerned here are:
 - Tribulation saints (gentiles) – see *Revelation 6: 9-11*
 - Messianic believers (restored Israel) – see *Jeremiah 30: 7-9*
 - To be a believer in this time means persecution and death
- Authority over every tribe, tongue and nation – worldwide
 - All who dwell upon the earth (earth-dwellers)
 - It may well be that the worship of the Beast leads to tribes, tongues and nations to give the Beast authority over them (willingly)
 - Various nations (Russia, Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Libya and others) will come against Israel and be defeated (see *Ezekiel 38 and 39*) – it may be that this opens the way for the Beast to come as peacemaker (remember he ‘confirms a covenant’ [*Daniel 9: 27*])
 - The ‘every tribe, tongue and nation’ may indicate that Israel too falls under the spell of the Beast...both in worship and giving him power over them – especially after the Beast ‘confirms a covenant’ with Israel...quite possibly this is the Land Covenant asserting Israel’s right to the land given by God in Genesis (*Genesis 12: 1-3, 12: 6-8, 13: 14-17, 15: 7-21, 17: 5-8*)
 - Clearly, Yeshua’s warnings in *Matthew 24: 15-22* are not heeded by all Jewish people – hence this ‘time of Jacob’s trouble’
 - His rule extends over all the world – the last world empire before Yeshua’s return to rule and to reign – the last 3½ years of the tribulation the Beast will turn from peacemaker to show his true tyrannical, demonic character

See Supplementary Note 51: ‘The Revived Roman Empire (Rome II)’

What is said about those who worship the Beast? Verse 8

- They are called ‘those who dwell on the earth’
 - Earth Dwellers – those whose lives and focus are on earthly things and not on God – they are non-believers
 - All such people – note **all** – will worship the Beast
 - Only those who have been born again, whose lives are focussed on God and His Son, Yeshua – only these are excluded...for they are not ‘earth-dwellers’ but citizens of heaven (see *Ephesians 1: 3-4*)

- Earth-dweller's names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life (*verse 8*)
 - Because their names are not found among those of the redeemed, they are given over to error – they would not believe the truth; now they believe a lie
 - See *Revelation 13: 12-14, 17: 8* and *20: 15*
 - Contrast with the Gospel – see *Revelation 14: 6-7*
 - The Book of Life – see *Revelation 3: 5; Daniel 12: 1; Luke 10: 20*
- Note: **‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’!!!!!!**
 - God's Salvation Plan was initiated from the very foundation of the world
 - All things were created by Yeshua, for Yeshua (*Colossians 1: 16-20*)
 - According to God's eternal, electing purpose before creation, the death of Christ seals the redemption of the elect forever (see *Hebrews 7: 25*)
 - Neither Satan nor the Beast can ever take away the salvation of the elect
 - The eternal registry of the elect will never be altered, nor will the saved in the Beast's day worship him.

Matthew Henry comments in relation to verse 8:

The limitation of the devil's power and success, and that both as to time and persons. He is limited in point of time; his reign is *to continue forty-and-two months* (verse 5), suitable to the other prophetic characters of the reign of antichrist. He is also limited as to the persons and people that he shall entirely subject his will and power; it will be only those *whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life*. Christ had a chosen remnant, *redeemed by his blood, recorded in his book, sealed by his Spirit*; and though the devil and antichrist might overcome their bodily strength, and take away their natural life, they could never conquer their souls, nor prevail with them to forsake their Saviour and revolt to his enemies.

