

Revelation 13 • Chapter Study

INTRO

Ask most people what the Book of Revelation is about, and they'll tell you it's about the Last Days, the End Times.

It contains visions of God's wrath & judgment.

If you ask them to name something specific, most likely they'll mention the # 666 & the Mark of the Beast. That's found in the chapter we're looking at tonight.

Rev. 13 is the premier passage which tells us about this strange actor on the last day's stage popularly known as "*The Antichrist*."

But he's not called that **here**. Here called the "***beast from the sea***."

He gets many other titles in Scripture as well.

- Belial – Judges 19:22 20:13 (A personal opponent of Yahweh)
- The King of the North – Daniel 11:40
- The prince who is to come – Daniel 9:26
- The little horn – Daniel 7:8
- The boastful mouth – Daniel 7:11
- The prince of this world – John 14:30
- The man of sin – 2 Thess 2:3
- The son of perdition – 2 Thess 2:3
- The lawless one – 2 Thess 2:8
- Antichrist - 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7

Linking Rev. 13, Dan. 7 & 2 Thess 2 we get good picture of his career & what to expect when he rises to power.

Rev. 12 & 13 introduce the ***main players*** during the Tribulation period:

- Israel – 12:1
- Satan – 12:3,9
- Christ – 12:5
- The antichrist – 13:1
- The false prophet – 13:11

¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea.

In Ch. 12, John saw things *in heaven*.

His perspective now is back on earth. He's on a beach.

Living in SoCal & VC in particular, we dig the beach.

We go there for recreation; picnics & just hanging out.

Some of us enjoy sailing & surfing.

Most people of the ancient world would consider that odd in the extreme.

The ocean was dangerous; something to be avoided.

No one went sailing for the fun of it.

No one had a picnic at the beach or sun-bathed. No one surfed.

The ocean was a highway for trade & a food source.

And it was only hardened men who worked it.

While there were certain people like the Greeks & Phoenicians who'd mastered the seas, nearly everyone else avoided it.

And especially the Jews.

They regarded the sea with suspicion.

It's the place the Philistines, one of their greatest enemies had come from.

It was the final ***dumping ground***.

All streams & rivers flowed into it but not out; so all that was carried by the rivers ended up in the sea.

The Jews were never a sea-faring people, except for a brief period under Solomon; and even then, most of his navy was comprised of mercenaries from other nations. (1 Kings 9:26-27)

The sea became a Hebrew **idiom** for the nations; all the Gentiles.

So as John's vision sets him on the beach, he stands on the edge of the Gentile world; united by its hostility to God.

And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having 7 heads & 10 horns, and on his horns 10 crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

This word "beast" mean a wild, dangerous, & sometimes even **venomous** creature.

This isn't a word you'd use to describe your pet French poodle "Fluffy."

This is something dangerous that inspires terror; more like this dog

It rises up out of the sea; out of the Gentile world hostile to God.

It has 7 heads, topped by 10 horns.

Each horn is crowned by a **diadem**; that is a **royal** crown.

These are not the **stephanos** or victory wreath given a winning athlete.

Diadems represent rule, not reward.

This combo of images is meant to impress us w/1 overwhelming idea – **EARTHLY POWER!**

Heads speak of **authority** // **Horns** speak of **power**.

Crowns speak of position & rule; the Office of National Sovereignty = Think Presidents, Prime Ministers, Premiers, Kings.

Whoever or whatever this beast is, it's the summation of earthly civil power.

It also sounds a lot like the dragon we saw last week in ch. 12, v. 3.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having 7 heads and 10 horns, and 7 diadems on his heads.

The only difference is the number of crowns.

In ch. 13 there are 10, **1 for each horn**.

In ch. 12 there are 7, **1 for each head**.

There's a **close affinity** between the dragon & beast, but they're **not identical**.

We'll see that as we read on.

² Now the beast which I saw [**wasn't like a dragon; it**] **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.

John knew what he was seeing linked to Dan. 7 where the prophet had a vision of 4 great world empires that would come to dominate the Earth.

Note the similarities to what John sees in Rev. 13 -

² Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the 4 winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. [The Mediterranean] ³ And 4 great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. ⁴ The 1st was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

That represented the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar.

⁵ "And suddenly another beast, a 2nd, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and *had* 3 ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

That's the Persian Empire.

⁶ "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back 4 wings of a bird. The beast also had 4 heads, and dominion was given to it.

This was the Greek Empire.

⁷ "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a 4th beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong.

This corresponds to John's use of the word '**beast**' in Rev. 13.

It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was*

different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had 10 horns. ⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was

another horn, a little 1, coming up among them, before whom 3 of the 1st horns were plucked out by the roots.

And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

When John saw this beast w/10 horns, he'd think of Daniel's vision & realize he's seeing the same beast, but

w/greater detail than Daniel had seen.

Take note that the animals listed by John are in reverse order from Daniel.

They're backward because while **Daniel** looked *forward* to **coming** world empires, **John** is looking **back**!

Babylon fell to Persia, which fell to Greece, which was taken over by Rome.

John lived in the time of Rome.

But in this vision he's in the future & sees Rome rise once more to dominate the earth.

The beast has the 10 horns of Daniel's 4th beast, but he **adds** the description of 7 heads.

Putting Rev. 13 & Dan. 7 together . . .

The beast **begins** as a confederacy of 10 governments.

To unite them in one system, 3 of their leaders are uprooted & replaced by a new ruler who dominates them all

Daniel 7:8 calls him the *little horn*.

Students of the Bible have long understood Daniel & John to be referring to the Antichrist, a dictator who'll lead some kind of End Times world-dominating government.

The 4th beast of Daniel's visions is Rome.

It goes into a kind of **hibernation** lasting generations, then re-emerges in the last days to become the military, economic, & political base on which the Antichrist erects his authority.

It's fascinating to watch the EU = European Union because in many ways it is Rome reborn.

V1 says the beast's 7 heads have a **blasphemous name** written on them.

What that name is we're not told. Whatever it is, it's an expression of defiance against God.

V2 says the dragon, which 12:9 tells us is the devil, gives the beast his power, throne, & **mega** authority.

In Luke 4, satan tempted Jesus by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would just bow & worship him?

Jesus did not argue & say the kingdoms weren't the devil's to give.

The **force** of the temptation that Jesus came to reclaim the world.

The devil offered him a shortcut; an easier way than the cross.

Paul calls satan the "god of this world" & the "prince of the power of the air." (2 Cor. 4:4 Eph 2:2)

Jesus refused the devil's offer of earthly domination.

Here in Rev 13, the devil hands it over to **another** man; not Christ, but *antichrist*; the one comes *in his own name*.

In John 5:43 Jesus said –

I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

That may be the blasphemous name written on the heads of the beast in v1.

The Antichrist is the **culmination** of the devil's strategy to oppose God that began all the way back in Eden.

There he enlisted mankind in his rebellion against God.

His appeal to Eve was she could become *like* God.

The antichrist will seem to be the *fulfillment* of the devil's offer to Eve.

2 Thess. 2 says the antichrist will possess *seemingly godlike powers*.

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day [the Day of the Lord]* will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. ...

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.

"THE lie" Paul refers to here is the **1st lie** – the 1 told Eve in Eden. Gen 3:5

It's the lie satan told himself; "I shall be like the Most High." Isa 14:14

"The" lie the earth-dwellers will buy in the last days is the idea they can be gods.

What will give that deception its convincing force is that the antichrist seems to prove he's achieved deity by the miracles & signs he performs.

I have a whole study on this I want to share soon. Let me summarize it now...

The world is being groomed to accept the idea of humanity's emergence into a new species.

The most current theory of evolution is called *punctuated equilibrium*.

PE proposes that evolution moves forward, not according to Darwin's idea of slow mutation over long periods of time, but in quantum leaps from one species to another.

The last leap was from ***homo erectus*** to ***homo sapiens***.

The next leap will be to ***homo divinitas*** in which people possess what seem to us now as god-like powers to manipulate the fabric of creation.

On one hand we have ***Transhumanists***; hard-core science types who want to merge biology with technology to help make the leap.

And on the other hand are ***New Age spiritualists*** who say they're in touch with ascended beings, entities who've already made the leap and want to show the rest of us how to make it ourselves.

Hollywood is awash with movies & TV shows filled with super heroes with super powers & mutants who've already evolved to the next level.

And in these mutant movies; the good guys are the mutants.

The bad guys are the normal humans who resist evolution.

The stage is well set for the emergence of the antichrist; a man given the earthly dominion of the devil & wielding god-like power.

³ And *I saw* 1 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?"

The 7 heads of the beast represent civil rulers who lead alongside the antichrist in the last days.

1 of the heads is *mortally wounded*; that leader is killed.

V14 makes it clear the wound is inflicted by a ***weapon***; so this is a literal act of violence.

Miraculously, the wound heals; a resurrection takes place!

It's *this miracle* that catapults the antichrist to world attention.

Going back to Dan. 7, this is the basis of the little horn's rising to power in the midst of the 10.

It causes the uprooting of 3, leaving 7.

This is conjecture, but it's possible the leaders of 3 EU nations realize the antichrist has garnered way too much power during the first half of the Tribulation.

They regard him as a threat to the sovereignty of their nations and conspire to assassinate him.

They pull it off. What they aren't planning on is the supernatural intervention of satan, who stages a resurrection by ***possessing the corpse*** of the fallen leader.

It's at that point he becomes, in the truest sense, the *antichrist*.

His resurrection causes the world to marvel and fall all over itself in lauding him.

He exposes the conspiracy; the perpetrators are executed and the leadership of their nations is taken over by the antichrist.

The earth-dwellers begin to think no one can defeat the antichrist.

After all, how do you defeat a guy who rises from the dead?

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for 42 months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

This is another direct link to Dan 7 where the little horn spews pompous words . . .

⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom 3 of the 1st horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. . .

¹⁹ "Then I wished to know the truth about the 4th beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and the 10 horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which 3 fell,

namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

²¹ “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

²³“Thus he said: ‘The 4th beast shall be a 4th kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. ²⁴ The 10 horns *are* 10 kings *Who* shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the 1st *ones*, and shall subdue 3 kings. ²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

John’s vision in Rev. 13 is clearly the same as Daniel’s – look on here. It becomes even more clear -

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.

In v5, John says the antichrist is given his authority for 42 months; 3½ years.

Daniel refers to this same period in 7:25 as “a time, times and a half time.”

V7 links us to the last verse of ch12 -

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Don’t be thrown by the word “saints” here.

Some assume this means the Rapture doesn’t take place till **after** the Tribulation because the saints are battered by the antichrist during the last half of the Trib.

“Saints” isn’t used exclusively for the Church.

The word means, “set-apart one,” & refers to whatever group of people at any given time are the focus of God’s redemptive attention.

In the OT, the saints were the faithful of Israel.

Right now in the Church Age, the saints are Christians.

But during the Trib, the saints will be the believers who come to faith *after* the Rapture.

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

All the earth-dwellers will worship the A/C, which clarifies the pompous blasphemies he speaks.

The world worships him for the very reason that in his authority and power to command all the nations, he DEMANDS their worship.

He claims to be god!

As Paul tells us in 2 Thess 2, he enters the holy place in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and declares himself god.

V8 reminds us the human race is divided into 2 groups; the lost & saved.

While the **differences** between these 2 groups may not be so obvious right now, during the *The Great Tribulation*; they’ll be crystal.

The earth-dwellers will be identified by the *mark of the beast* we’ll read about in a moment, while the saved will be marked in God’s Book of heavenly reward and eternal life.

The earth-dwellers will worship satan & the antichrist.

The saved worship Jesus.

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.

Interpreting this verse has proven a monumental challenge for Bible students because it seems so out of place in the visions of this section of Revelation.

John stops to issue a word of exhortation to his readers.

But what follows doesn’t at first blush seem to fit the context.

How does v10 relate to what we’ve just encountered in vs. 1-8?

The answer is found in the 2 groups of v8; the earth-dwellers and the saints.

John urges his readers to realize while the difference between the lost and saved will be obvious to all in the Last Days, that **difference** exists today, even though it might not be as obvious.

In John's day, believers were faced with a choice, not unlike the one that will face people in the last days.

The Roman Empire had embarked on a practice that **foreshadows** what will happen in the last days.

It was called **Caesar worship**.

As the boundaries of the Roman Empire spread, it became increasingly important to the Romans to enforce their hold over outlying provinces.

So they came up with the idea of using Caesar as the focal point of loyalty.

Every so often, people had to come before the magistrate of their region with a public vow of allegiance by offering a pinch of incense on an altar to the Emperor.

Their vow was given in the words, "**Caesar is Lord.**"

They would then be given a small scroll (libellus) identifying them as a loyal member of the Empire.

That scroll "marked" their loyalty.

The problem with this for Christians and Jews is that Caesar wasn't just considered to be a ruler; He was the focal point of the imperial cult & considered the embodiment of the spirit of Rome; a god to be worshipped.

Pagans had no problem worshipping Caesar since they believed in a multitude of deities. What was one more.

But Jews & Christians couldn't declare Caesar Lord.

Jews were given an exemption because Rome recognized **Judaism** as a legitimate religion.

But Christians enjoyed no such exemption & were persecuted; executed as dangerously disloyal.

It's interesting reading the early church fathers at this time.

A good part of their work was addressed to Emperor & governors, trying to convince them to let up on their harassment of Christians over this issue.

They said while Christians couldn't say, "Caesar is Lord" there were no better & more loyal members of the Empire than they.

Why, they prayed for the Emperor's health & the peace & prosperity of the Empire every day.

When John wrote this at the end of the 1st C, Caesar worship was just becoming standard policy.

He saw how the seed of Caesar worship would bloom in to full-flower in a Revived Roman Empire when the antichrist demands worship & the world is divided between earth-dwellers & saints.

So he exhorts his **original readers** to realize they were being challenged with a decision on which group they'd identify with; those who draw their identity from Earthly affiliations, or those who identify with heaven.

They have to choose between captivity & freedom.

Between violence & peace; earthly or spiritual power.

Between the here-&-now or the here-after.

That challenge is *our* challenge. So let him/her who has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying.

We must choose between the World & God.

Will we define ourselves by the world's values or by the priorities of the Kingdom of God.

Those values "**mark**" us; they **identify** us.

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had 2 horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹²

And he exercises all the authority of the 1st beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

John now sees **another** beast.

It's the same word. It's a dangerous, wild creature.

But whereas the 1st beast rose from the **sea**, this comes from the **earth**.

Since the sea represents the Gentile world, the *earth* may represent the stock of Israel.

This guy may be **Jewish**.

His visage is also very different from the 1st beast.

While dangerous & wild by nature, he has the exterior of something peaceful.

He too has horns, but they're the little nubs of a sheep.

He looks harmless as a sheep.

The 1st beast was described as a **political** power.

When you hear the word, **lamb**, what do you think of **in terms of symbolism**?

Sheep were the preferred animal of **sacrifice**. A lamb speaks of the **religious realm**.

And horns speak of **authority** = In this case, a **religious hierarchy**.

This lamb speaks like a dragon.

To people of the 1st C, the danger a dragon presented wasn't that it breathed fire.

That idea comes a bit later; & is an idiom for the **real danger** of a dragon = **It's speech**.

Dragons had a slick, clever, & mesmerizing voice.

The flames that come later were symbolic of its destructive words.

The image John paints of the 2nd beast is 1 of a religious authority that deludes & deceives.

This man has as much power & authority *in the religious sphere* as the A/C has in the political.

But the 2nd beast doesn't call people to worship himself.

His goal is to aim attention & worship to the 1st beast.

Because of this, he's referred to as **the false prophet** // In 16:13, he's given **that title**.

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.

If the antichrist does indeed present himself to the world as one who's made the quantum leap from mortal to immortal, and that allegiance to him will usher in a grand new day for mankind, the false prophet will seem a convincing **first convert**.

He too will perform miraculous signs & call the world to join the A/C's program so they too can reap the benefits of his new system.

What we're seeing here is a merging of State & Religion.

Where institutional religion becomes the tool of the State, to promote the political agenda of the ruler.

There have been many historical examples of this.

Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome; even the Third Reich are a handful of examples how the power of religion was bent to the ends of the State.

I find it fascinating while there's a debate about the separation of Church & State in the US, few people have taken notice that debate is only pitted between the Gospel & the State; not other religions.

In the *Torcaso v. Watkins* decision of 1961, the US Supreme Court labeled **secular humanism** a religion. Yet secular humanism is the guiding philosophy for every branch of civil government, most notably, the public schools.

Did you know what today we call Secular Humanism was originally called the **Human Potential Movement**. !!!

It's the *old lie*, the *original lie* updated for modern man.

It will be formalized, institutionalized, & realized as the program of the antichrist & false prophet.

One of the signs the false prophet performs is to call down fire from heaven.

It's the **same sign** the 2 witnesses of ch11 do.

Just as the magicians of Pharaoh's court duplicated some of the signs Moses performed, so the false prophet duplicate a legit miracle of God's servants. (Exo 7 & 8)

The point is Signs & Wonders **aren't enough**.

The real issue is: What's the message the signs point to & verify?

In Deut 13, Moses warned about false prophets & miracle workers who perform miracles, then say, "Come now, let us go after other gods."

Such **shamsters** were to be shunned.

The false prophet will call down fire from heaven So what >> His message is blasphemy!

Some years ago when I worked with a guy whose mother was into the flashy prosperity teachers.

I said they were false teachers.

He objected by saying their wealth was **proof** their message was true.

He challenged me often; “If they’re wrong, why does God bless them so much?”

He was never satisfied when I said wealth wasn’t proof of truth.

That their prosperity wasn’t *God’s blessing*.

The devil is more than pleased to promote his lies by giving wealth & power to his servants.

And so it will be with the false prophet & antichrist.

The definitive moment in their corporate agenda to focus world attention & worship on the antichrist will be when the false prophet leads in the creation of an image in honor of the antichrist.

Sitting as he does at the top of religious institutional power, this image is somehow **religious**, specially as we see how it’s used.

¹⁵ He [**the false prophet**] 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.

Okay, this is just freaky! How are we to understand this? Just what is this image?

Is it a statue of stone, metal, wood, plastic, or something else?

Is this some new technology; maybe a clone of the antichrist?

The Greek word for image is *eikon*, from which we get our word “*icon*”.

It meant a **likeness**, & referred to a statue, profile, or representation & resemblance.

It’s best for us to avoid speculation on just what form this image takes.

The point is, it’s an inanimate object the false prophet animates.

It comes to life & affirms the world’s need to show allegiance to & worship of the A/C.

Refusniks will be executed.

The idea of worshipping the US President seems ludicrous to us.

Yet the news often shows pictures & video of people in other nations idolizing their ruler.

Mao, Stalin, Lenin, even Saddam Hussein when he was in power.

Many in Iran elevate pictures of Supreme Leader Khamenei.

And these are all just men; political leaders.

What will be the reaction of the world to the A/C who wields power over a large part of the world in every sphere; military, political, economic, & religious?

One of the most important & core prohibitions God gave Israel was the ban on idolatry.

2 of the 10 Commandments speak to it.

Worship no God but God & make no image to worship Him by.

Idolatry was the main stumbling block for Israel prior to the Babylonian captivity.

One of the major ways the false prophet will blaspheme God during the Trib will be making this image then using it to focus worship on the antichrist **in the place of God**.

In 1 Cor. 10, Paul says idols in themselves are nothing more than the material they’re made of, but that demons **use them** to deceive mankind & enjoy religious devotion.

So it may very well be a demon animates this image.

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 1 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.

Now, this is the one passage of the book of Revelation that has generated the most discussion and speculation.

This is exciting stuff, and that’s why we’ll save it for Sunday.