



gracefellowship

Revelation
March 17, 2019
Anti-Jesus

:: Revelation 13 (Daniel 7)

If you have been journeying with us through the book of Revelation you have seen how Jesus is revealing Himself to His Church throughout the book. Jesus is powerfully at work throughout the book and John has given us glimpses of His glory and majesty in heaven; he has shown us Jesus as both a powerful lion and a sacrificial lamb; he has painted a picture of Jesus as being triumphant over evil as the Judge of all the earth, and being powerful enough to protect His people even in the face of tremendous hardship and persecution.

Last week we looked at Revelation 12 where John gave us a perspective on the war that has been raging in heaven and on earth between Satan and God and the people of God. We found that while Satan is a dangerous adversary, he is a defeated adversary- Jesus has overcome Satan by way of the cross and the followers of Jesus fight against Satan by standing under the covering of the cross of Christ and by remaining faithful to Him in our testimony, both in word and in action.

Today we will see, again, how Satan has been waging war against the people of God throughout history and what his game plan is as his time draws shorter and shorter. It is imperative for us to recognize how Satan operates and what our response as followers of Jesus should be living in a world system that is becoming more sinful and more sympathetic to Satan's kingdom rule on this earth. In fact, there are two kingdoms at play in the story. We know that the earth is currently the domain of Satan and he has worked hard to establish his kingdom here and to keep as many people as possible away from God and out of God's Kingdom. But Jesus came to wreck all that! With Jesus' death on the cross we see the beginning of the Kingdom of God being established on earth. In fact, we saw in Revelation 11, when John describes the sounding of the last trumpet of judgment and Jesus returns, that loud voices in heaven proclaim, "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

Today what we are going to look at is the way Satan operates through an empirical system under his influence and how that system will move into hyper-

drive during the years leading up to the return of Jesus under the authority of two beasts, as John calls them, men we most commonly call the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet.

Before we get to Revelation I think we need to go back and pick up on some prophecy from Daniel to more fully understand what John will reveal to us in Chapter 13 of Revelation.

:: Daniel 7

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

2 Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.

3 Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

4 “The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it.

5 “And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and eat your fill of flesh!’

6 “After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

7 “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

8 “While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

9 “As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

11 “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.

12 (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

15 “I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me.

16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. “So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things:

17 ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth.

18 But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.’

19 “Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.

20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them,

22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

23 “He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.

24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.

25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.

The meaning of the vision:

Four Beasts represent four Kingdoms:

1. Lion with wings like an eagle = Babylon
2. Bear = Medo-Persian Empire
3. Leopard = Greece
 - a. Four Heads= kingdom divided between Alexander the Great’s four Generals
4. Beast = Rome
 - a. 10 Horns = kingdoms that come from Rome

b. Little Horn = The Anti-Christ

- i. He will be boastful; speaking against God**
- ii. He will wage war against the people of God**
- iii. He will attempt to change the final outcome of God's plans**

When we see this, it appears terrible and we may ask ourselves if this final beast will prevail. Pay attention to what Daniel calls the end of the matter:

26 “ ‘But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’

28 “This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.”

Even knowing the final outcome of God's victory and the people of God overcoming the anti-Christ, Daniel still finds himself deeply troubled to the point of physical sickness. So, during the time in which we look at this beast who will wage war against the people of God and will try to war against God himself, if you feel upset and troubled by the prospects of the world under the control of the anti-Christ, I want to encourage you that you are not alone! Even Daniel felt the weight and dread of the final days of earth under the authority of this beast.

But take heart as we read and study together- all is not lost and the final victory of God has already been determined! There may be tribulation and persecution for the people of God in these last days, but our we are victorious in Christ!

Now let's turn our attention to the book of Revelation and see what John says about this beast Daniel introduced us to.

:: Revelation 13:1-10

The Beast Out of the Sea

1 The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast.

4 People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the

beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”

5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months.

6 It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.

7 It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.

10 “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.” This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.

The Beast Out of the Earth

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon.

12 It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

13 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people.

14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

15 The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

16 It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads,

17 so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

18 This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

As we discuss this passage there are a few things I want us to have on the forefront of our minds. Last week we discussed some of the tactics Satan has used in his war against humanity as God’s prized creation.

Tactics and Strategies of Satan:

- **accusation**
- **temptation**

- **persecution**
- **deception**

Part of Satan's deception is to get people to worship him and his world system. What John describes in the end times is the culmination of that deception in which Satan literally tries to do exactly what God has done. Satan will mimic God in an attempt to set himself up as God.

A. Satan mimics God through an unholy trinity

- i. Dragon- Satan

- ii. The Beast out of the sea- Antichrist (The sea probably represents him coming from the chaotic world. The sea was always seen as turbulent, chaotic, uncontrollable, unpredictable, and unable to be conquered)

- iii. The Beast out of the earth- False Prophet (Coming out of the earth may simply mean it comes from God's original creation)

Satan makes his unholy trinity to mirror God's creation. In chapter 12 we saw the beast as a sign in the heavens; now we see a beast coming out of the sea and the earth. Satan is trying to parallel the God who created the heavens, the earth and the sea.

I think the description of the two beasts has two uses.

Two Beasts, Two Uses

First, Satan uses two forces within his kingdom to control humanity: Government and Religion.

The beast out of the sea is described this way: *2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.*

If you think back to what we read in Daniel earlier, do you see any parallels? The kingdoms Daniel described were like a lion a bear and a leopard. Now we see the empire Satan raises to fit that same description- however, this time those attributes of a leopard with catlike vigilance, a bear with slow crushing power, and a lion with authority and ferociousness are all found in this single kingdom. This is a kingdom that will dominate the entire earth.

The beast like kingdom represents political, military and economic power in the service of Satan to oppose God and His people.

John is writing in a period of time when the Roman empire dominates the landscape. Empires tend to what full control and they decide what is right and wrong at the whim of their leader. That same empirical spirit is in the earth today.

While we have many wonderful religious freedoms and liberties and may not see this spirit of empirical rule too clearly, our brothers and sisters in other nations are already experiencing the war Satan's kingdom is waging against them as Christians. Right now China is intentionally, systematically persecuting Christians in an attempt to shut down the Church. In the Middle East and in North Korea Christians are feeling the power of the dragon working through government and religion to attempt to destroy the work of God in those areas. (How do I say this better and represent this idea more fully?)

Not only is there political authority Satan uses to oppose God, he will also use religion to his advantage to deceive the nations.

:: Revelation 13:11-12

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon.

12 It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

John says this beast had two horns like a lamb, but when it spoke it was like a dragon. False religion can appear innocent and harmless- some even look close to Christianity. But Satan uses religion to confuse people, divide people, and deceive people from the truth found in God's kingdom. In the final world order, religion will be used not only to deceive people from following God, but to actively push people to worship the Anti-Christ.

The first meaning of the two beasts can be seen in the systems of corrupt, wicked government that pulls people toward an empire rather than toward God and false religion that is employed to deceive people from the truth.

The second meaning of the two beasts is that they are two humans who will be given authority over the realms of government and religion to deceive people and carry out Satan's final plans to destroy the work of God.

In the last days, prior to the return of Jesus, Satan will empower a ruler who will set up a global kingdom. Daniel described him as a little horn; John calls him the beast out of the sea. Look at Revelation 13:2 to see another place Satan mimics God.

::Revelation 13:2

2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast.

Earlier I said that Satan wants to mimic God in creating an unholy trinity. The Anti-Christ is Satan's response to Jesus. This will be a man who will be indwelt, I believe, by Satan himself.

Jesus said, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." The Anti-Christ will be able to say, "If you've seen me you've seen Satan." He will be the embodiment of evil and will lead the nations to embrace his evil, rebellious ways.

To mimic God even more fully, we are told this man will even sustain a fatal wound and be brought back to life. The whole world will be amazed by him and follow him. Isn't it amazing, Jesus gave up His life and returned from the dead, but the world rejects Him.

John's audience in the first century would have heard this and probably thought of Nero, who killed himself, but there was never a burial. Rumors began that he hadn't actually died, but had gone to the East and would one day return to again rule over Rome. He was the first century National Enquirer version of Elvis!

With the Anti-Christ's resurrection from death the deception of Satan will be so strong that people will see this man and follow him because of the activity of Satan. And the same way Jesus always points people to the Father, the beast will point people to the dragon.

4 People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?"

Satan doesn't just have a fake Jesus, he also has a false prophet that is his version of the Holy Spirit. And the same way the Holy Spirit points people to Jesus, the False Prophet will force people toward worship of the Anti-Christ.

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon.

12 It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

13 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people.

14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

15 The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

16 It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads,

17 so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the

name of the beast or the number of its name.

18 This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

The false prophet will launch a massive propaganda campaign, complete with supernatural feats, to deceive people into worshipping the first beast. Jesus and the Apostles warned about these kinds of signs coming from false prophets. As followers of Jesus it is important for us to remember that just because something looks like a miracle of God, it may be a tool of deception Satan is using to mimic the actions of God. We have to be wise in understanding these things.

Paul said this about when and how the Anti-christ will be revealed:

:: 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie,

10 and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie

12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Satan is going to establish a global kingdom and a global religion focused on him. His kingdom will be in direct opposition to the Kingdom of God. As people who belong to God's Kingdom, what should Christians do as the world follows the beast?

:: Revelation 13:8-10

8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.

10 "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed." This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

The earth will worship the Anti-Christ because they do not follow Jesus. Disciples of Jesus will not worship the Anti-Christ. Disciples of Jesus will resist his rule and reign. But that doesn't necessarily mean we will fight for our civil rights or take up arms against him. Did you hear how John instructs us to live for Jesus in these last days?

9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.

10 "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed." This calls for patient

endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

Disciples of Jesus will go into captivity and will die by the sword as we resolutely stand on the side of Jesus with patient endurance and faithfulness.

We don't defeat Satan's kingdom by being militant. We stand with Jesus. He will defeat Satan's kingdom and bring His Kingdom to earth. In fact, we are going to see that play out next week. For now, ask yourself this question: Am I living squarely in God's Kingdom? Or do you find yourself proclaiming to be a Christian, but buying into the empirical system of comfort, entertainment, wealth, and false religion instead of being sold out to Jesus as your Lord and King?

Here's what this passage makes abundantly clear...you must choose a side. You are either with God, or you're not. You're either with Satan, or you're not. There is no middle ground. Any time I choose sides, I want to be on the winning side! So it's important to know that while Satan will have a moment in the sun where his kingdom seems to be victorious and he will trample over the people of God, his time is very short and he will be defeated for eternity. Next week we will look at what that means and see a description of Satan's kingdom come to ruins. God is forever victorious over Satan and God's Kingdom will be established eternally!