

Wednesday Evening Bible
The Book of Revelation
Lesson 20
Chapter 13

- Tonight we continue to examine the events of the great parenthesis/pause that takes us from chapters 12 to 16
 - The particular section we will examine tonight is a continuation of that which we studied in chapter 12
 - Chapter 12 introduced us to 4 important players of the Great Tribulation
 - “the woman” = The nation of Israel
 - “the child” = Jesus Christ
 - “the dragon” = Satan
 - “Michael” = The Archangel of Heaven
 - Chapter 13 introduces us to 3 more important players of the Great Tribulation, who in addition to the 4 revealed in chapter 12, are the 7 key players of the final days
- 1) The first “beast”
 - a) v. 1 begins, “Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea.”
 - 1) Two metaphors/symbols are mentioned in this first verse
 - 2) “sea” represents humanity; some think this is a specific reference to the Mediterranean Sea, and even more specifically to a revival of the Roman Empire (both views have their merits)
 - 3) “beast” represents the one world government, and more specifically the leader of that government, the Antichrist
 - 4) This “beast” corresponds to the “beast” described in Daniel 7:7-8
 - 5) The “beast” in Revelation corresponds to Daniel’s “beast” in that period of time where the “little horn” has overcome the “3 horns”
 - 6) “horn” refers to a political leader, therefore the “little horn” (antichrist) must overcome 3 other rulers/kings before he can truly take over
 - 7) The last phrase of v. 2 is important in identifying the beast, “The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority”
 - 8) Meaning, that it is Satan who will give this “beast” his power, authority, and his earthly throne
 - b) Notice how the “beast” is described in v. 1-2
 - 1) “having seven heads and ten horns and on his horns ten crowns”
 - 2) Each “head” represents a nation and each “horn” and “crown” a ruler/leader of these nations
 - 3) The number 7 (7 heads) will give the impression that this alliance is perfect, complete, and divine in origin
 - 4) Some scholars think that the 7 heads represent 7 successive rulers who will lead up to the Antichrist, others say that the 7 heads represent 7 subordinate rulers who will work for the Antichrist
 - 5) Revelation 17:7-14 gives is the foundation for these views (TURN and READ)
 - 6) There’s merit in both views, and I don’t know if either is exactly correct.

- 7) The “beast” will be comprised of 10 nations that will unite to form this one world government
 - 8) Many believe that this one world government will be a revival of the old Roman Empire
 - 9) I believe that these nations will be remnants of that old Empire, but I don’t know that this new government will be exactly the same composition as the old
 - 10) Some doubt that such an alliance could ever happen again, but just consider the old communist block nations rallying around the plight of the Serbs in Yugoslavia, and you wouldn’t be far from having much of the old Roman Empire reunited again
 - 11) “and on his heads a blasphemous name”
 - 12) Indicates that this government stands in opposition to God and to Christ
- c) John then describes the “beast” in v. 2 using the language of Daniel
- 1) Now don’t get the “beast” (singular) of Revelation confused with the “beasts” (plural) of Daniel
 - 2) Daniel saw 3 “beasts” or successive Empires, and John sees 1 (actually 2, but they are working together)
 - 3) Yet, we need to understand Daniel’s vision, for the “beast” of Revelation is the culmination of all 3 of Daniel’s “beasts”
 - 4) “Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard”
 - 5) The leopard implies great speed; Daniel’s leopard was the lightning quick Greek empire lead by Alexander the Great
 - 6) “and his feet were like the feet of a bear”
 - 7) The bear implies tremendous power; Daniel’s bear was the Medo-Persian empire Lead by Kings Darius (the Mede) and Cyrus (the Persian)
 - 8) “and his mouth like the mouth of a lion”
 - 9) The lion implies authority; Daniel’s lion was the Babylonian empire lead by wicked kings like Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar,
 - 10) But the “beast” that John sees has the characteristics of ALL 3 of these previous empires!
 - 11) Walvoord says, “The fourth empire gathers all these elements and characteristics in itself and is far more dreadful in its power and blasphemy than the preceding empires.”
- d) v. 3 tells us that something amazing happens to the beast, “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed.”
- 1) There are a variety of interpretations and views that abound today concerning the exact meaning and reference of this verse
 - 2) Most seem to agree that the primary leader of the one-world government will be mortally wounded, and will be at the point of death if he doesn’t actually die.
 - 3) With its leader incapacitated, the world’s government will also be near death, or die.
 - 4) Yet, somehow and someday, this leader (and his government) will be resurrected!
 - 5) This event is Satan’s effort to mimic and mock the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, and further convince the masses to follow the Antichrist.
- e) v. 4 reveals to us how the people of that day will respond to the “beast”
- 1) This “head” is Satan’s substitute for Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
 - 2) The people will worship not only the “beast” (the Antichrist) but also the “dragon” (Satan) and defy others to be “like the beast” and to “make war with the him”

- f) v. 5, “And he (beast) was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months”
 - 1) Again we see that familiar period of time, “forty-two months” given.
 - 2) This is a reference to the 70th week, that is the 7 year period of the end times.
 - 3) Specifically, to the last 3 ½ years, which we call the Great Tribulation.
 - g) v. 6 tells us more details of the “blasphemies” that the beast will utter
 - 1) “Blasphemies” are a major part of the Great Tribulation, and the Antichrist is the key leader in these things
 - 2) Daniel 11:37 tells us that the Antichrist will commit the ultimate blasphemy as he will declare that he is the one true god!
 - 3) “He (Antichrist) 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.”
 - 4) (Some believe that the Antichrist will be a homosexual – see above verse)
 - h) v. 7, we tend to focus on the statement that the “beast” will, “make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given Him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.”
 - 1) But allow to remind you “where” this “authority” ultimately will come from
 - 2) You see, Satan will think that he has given the “beast” this authority, but the truth is that this authority comes from the very throne room of God, and let me remind you that it is from within the throne room of God that the “dragon” and the “beast” will receive their final and eternal sentence of death and judgment!
 - 3) The world will “appear” to be out of control, but fear not for God is still on the throne, and as long as God is on the throne, God is in control!
 - i) v. 9-10 remind us of this important truths!
 - 1) Yet, the truth remains that “beast” will be given world wide authority of the earth for this specified period of time
 - 2) Daniel tells us of the first 3 beasts, who conquered much of the world, but John tells us of this next beast that will literally rule the whole world . . . for a time.
 - j) v. 8, the people of that day will “worship” the “beast” EXCEPT those, whose names are written in the “Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”
 - k) TRANS: Well, if all this isn’t bad enough, v. 11 reveals even more trouble . . .
- 2) The 2nd “beast”
- a) v. 11, “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth”
 - 1) This “beast” is different, for the first came from the “sea” but the 2nd comes from the “earth”
 - 2) Some scholars believe that the first beast is a Gentile and the 2nd best comes is a Jew, hence his origin from the “earth”
 - 3) Daniel tells us of 3 sequential beasts, with differing goals, one after the other, but John tells us of 2 beasts working alongside each other at the same time, for a common goal
 - 4) This 2nd beast is the “false prophet”
 - 5) It will be the job of the false prophet to direct man to worship the Antichrist through the establishment of the world wide apostate church

- b) v. 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.”
- 1) What we see here is Satan’s perverted version of the Trinity
 - 2) Satan, taking the role of God the Father
 - 3) Antichrist taking the role of Christ the Son
 - 4) False Prophet taking the role of the Holy Spirit
 - 5) Yet NONE of these 3 can fulfill the roles of the blessed Trinity of God!
 - 6) Notice how this 2nd “beast” is described
 - 7) “and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon”
 - 8) The “two horns like a lamb” give the 2nd beast the appearance of being gentle, meek, and mild
 - 9) According to Henry Alford, “But it speaks as a dragon; its words, which carry its real character, are fierce and unrelenting; while it professes that which is gentle, it behests are cruel.”
- c) v. 13, this 2nd “beast” does something amazing, “He (2nd beast) performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in sight of men.”
- 1) The false prophet could be trying to mimic the work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or maybe mocking Elijah’s miracles, or imitating the fire that proceeded from the mouths of the 2 witnesses (Revelation 11:5)
- d) v. 14, “And he (2nd beast) 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.”
- 1) Idolatry will run rampant in that day!
- e) v. 15, “And he (2nd beast) was granted to give breath to the image of the beast (1st 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.”
- 1) The reference to giving “breath to the image of the beast” confuses many, for the Greek word is pneuma which is spirit. The Greek word for “breath” and “life” is zoe
 - 2) The better translation here is, “And he was granted to give spirit to the image of the beast” meaning that the image doesn’t come alive, but is perceived by those who worship the image to be alive and give life
- f) v. 16, “He (2nd beast) causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads.”
- 1) “What” will this mark be?
 - 2) George W. Davis says that the mark of the beast is a poor copy of the seal of the Holy Spirit
 - 3) Others say that the mark is the name of the beast, or the number of the beast
 - 4) The truth is, we DON’T know! But the fact remains that there will be some visible “mark” that will distinguish those who follow the beast from those who do not
 - 5) Here’s the importance of this “mark”
- g) v. 17, “and that no one may be able to buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”
- 1) The “beast” will hold such control over all the world that those who reject him, and his mark, will be under great persecution and rejection economically, socially, and spiritually

- h) Chapter 13 closes with one of the most controversial verses of all the Bible . . .
- i) v. 18, “Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast (1st beast), for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.”
 - 1) There have been MANY elaborate, complex, and detailed “formulas” generated through the years to determine numerically the identity of the Antichrist
 - 2) But let me encourage you to use the formula we have used throughout the entire book of Revelation
 - 3) 6 = is the number of man; refers to man’s efforts; is as close to 7 (God’s number) as possible without being perfect and complete
 - 4) The fact that this number is repeated 3 times alludes to the fact that the Antichrist will try to present himself as being Christ repeatedly, but the discerning will recognize that he is a fraud
 - 5) To the point of even trying to imitate the Trinity, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and Satan himself will fail, and fail miserably!
 - 6) READ Walvoord, p. 212
 - (1) The general character of the great tribulation, however, is graphically portrayed in this chapter. It will be a time of absolute rule, and Satan will have his way. The ultimate in false religion will sweep the entire world in a manifestation of evil never before seen on the earth. The fact will be demonstrated beyond question that man is not able to solve his own problems and only God can bring righteousness and peace to the earth. The present attempts at unification of ecclesiastical and political power seem to be the forerunner and preparation for this end-time situation.¹

¹ John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Galaxie Software, 2008), 212.