

### BOOK OF REVELATION

#### Lesson 28 - Chapter 13

We had just begun Revelation chapter 13 last week when we ran out of time, so we'll continue with it today.

As a brief review: the events foretold by chapter 13 were not just future for John, but also future for us. This chapter is dominated by 3 characters: the dragon, the sea beast, and the land beast. References to these characters continues well after chapter 13 so we need to sort them out and get firmly in mind who they are and who or what they symbolize. The dragon symbolizes Satan and he was unequivocally identified as such one chapter back, in verse 9.

**<sup>CJB</sup> Revelation 12:9 *The great dragon was thrown out, that ancient serpent, also known as the Devil and Satan [the Adversary], the deceiver of the whole world. He was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.***

The sea beast is the first of the two so-called "beasts" to arise in chapter 13. He emerges from the ocean while the dragon (Satan) stands on the seashore either waiting for him to appear or more likely summoning him. The sea beast and the dragon have very similar appearances; they each have 7 heads and 10 horns, which indicates their intimate connection. One of the main ways to tell which is which is that back in chapter 12 verse 3 we were told that the dragon was red in color (no doubt that is why most illustrations, paintings and cartoons of the Devil are that he is red). On the other hand the sea beast's main feature is that he was colored like a leopard (presumably with spots). The next feature difference is that the dragon had 7 crowns adorning his 7 heads, while the sea beast had 10 crowns adorning his 10 horns. We must not overlook the use of the numbers 7 and 10. Seven is the ideal number and indicates completeness, wholeness and, at times, finality. Ten is a number that also indicates completeness but more in the sense of all-inclusiveness.....universality.

I mentioned last week that we should notice that Satan is mimicking God; and he does so because his chief weapon is deception. So it is no wonder that the Devil incorporates the numbers 7 and 10 in his physical appearance because 7 and 10 are usually associated with Godly actions. Since one of the primary characteristics of God is that He manifests Himself in multiple ways that we tend to call "persons" (which Christianity long ago transformed into the Trinity Doctrine), so we find Satan attempting the same thing. That is, Satan appears to us in Revelation as a kind of trinity: the dragon, the sea beast, and the land beast. And as we'll see a bit later, Satan will even try to mimic Christ and the special prophet that announced His advent.

Another important characteristic of the evil triumvirate is that like God the Father who is the ultimate holder of universal power and authority, which He assigns in part to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, Satan is preeminent over the realm of evil and is the source of the power and authority that he gives in part to the sea beast and to the land beast.

We have so much to discuss today, and it is difficult and complex but also enlightening. So let's re-read all of chapter 13 to get our foundation set for today's discussion.

### RE-READ REVELATION CHAPTER 12:18 - 13 end

Since we've thoroughly discussed the first couple of verses, let's move to verse 3. I ask that today you keep your Bibles open and that you follow the Scripture verses closely as I speak to you about them.

Verse 3 says that one of the 7 heads of the beast (meaning the sea beast since we have yet to be introduced to the 2nd beast, the land beast), seems to have been fatally wounded but was miraculously healed, and it so impressed the citizens of the world that they gave their allegiance to the sea beast. Just to be clear: the figures of the dragon and the sea beast are symbolic and not literal so that means that when they appear it will be as human beings or perhaps in some cases human institutions. The world will not see a literal 7 headed monster and an actual red dragon-like creature and (weirdly) follow them anymore than we would today!

In fact, says verse 4, the world will more than give their undying allegiance to the sea beast; they will worship him. In other words, the sea beast will be seen as divine or at least the level of public awe will be so great that they put all of their trust in him even if that trust might be more fear based than adoring for many. ***"Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?"*** Perhaps the best most recent analogy would be that the beast will be like Hitler only on a worldwide scale. While some in Germany willingly and with great hope gave Hitler glory and even love, more were simply in fear of him and believed that because of his unmatched power and cunning they had little choice but to follow and obey him.

Let's pause here a moment. The passage does NOT actually say that the world will give its allegiance to the sea beast; rather it says that the world will give its allegiance to the dragon....Satan. But, like God, Satan is an invisible spirit. So how will the world give its allegiance to something that is invisible? It will be via giving their allegiance to the visible, tangible human being that the sea beast symbolizes... the one who operates under the power and authority given to him by Satan... so in the end it is the same as the world giving its allegiance to Satan. It works the same with God. When we give our allegiance to Christ, who was not an invisible divine spirit when He roamed the Holy Land 2000 years ago but rather was a visible, tangible human being who operated under the power and authority given to Him by God in Heaven, then it is the same as giving our allegiance to God the Father in Heaven. Remember what Yeshua once said:

***CJB John 14:9 Yeshua replied to him, "Have I been with you so long without your knowing me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"***

So just as Christ was a Heaven-sent agent of God the Father... so very representative of every marvelous attribute of God the Father.... but still Yeshua was NOT God the Father... so will the sea beast be a Hell-sent agent of Satan.....displaying every evil attribute of Satan.... but still will

NOT be Satan. And as with Christ saying "if you've seen me you've seen the Father", so it will be that when people see the sea beast they will have seen Satan. This is the sense we are to take John 14:9 and it is also the sense we are to take this passage in Revelation.

Who or what, exactly, is the sea beast? As we discussed last week, depending on the theological source, he is either the Anti-Christ (a great world political leader) or he is the False Prophet (a great world religious leader). There is no consensus on this. I personally believe that the weight of scriptural evidence favors that the sea beast represents the Anti-Christ as well as the nations and leaders from whence he comes and is at first given his earthly political authority. But why is it that this beast emerges from the sea? I find that there are two reasons: first, we have a sea beast and a land beast because Satan has for eons been given authority by God to be the prince of the earth. Thus a satanic leader from the sea and another from the land are Satan fraudulently mimicking the Mighty Angel from Revelation 10 (my opinion is that this is the Angel of the Lord, a manifestation of God).

***CJB Revelation 10:5-7 <sup>5</sup> Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted his right hand toward heaven <sup>6</sup> and swore by the One who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it: "There will be no more delay; <sup>7</sup> on the contrary, in the days of the sound from the seventh angel when he sounds his shofar, the hidden plan of God will be brought to completion, the Good News as he proclaimed it to his servants the prophets."***

The Mighty Angel is declaring God's sovereignty over the entire earth by having one foot on the land and the other on the sea and pronouncing an oath, swearing by Yehoveh. So, Satan brings forth an evil angel (so to speak) from the land and another from the sea to show that he intends on hanging on to his rulership over the entire earth; a rulership that the Lord says has been removed from him and given to Christ (which is a relatively new development announced only in Revelation chapter 11), but which Satan intends to continue to battle to keep the status quo.

***CJB Revelation 11:15-17 <sup>15</sup> The seventh angel sounded his shofar; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah, and he will rule forever and ever!" <sup>16</sup> The twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones in God's presence fell on their faces and worshipped God, <sup>17</sup> saying, "We thank you, ADONAI, God of heaven's armies, the One who is and was, that you have taken your power and have begun to rule."***

The second reason that we have a beast emerging from the sea is that biblically, nearly without exception, the imagery of a sea monster or a sea dragon is symbolic of wicked kings and nations that oppress God's chosen people Israel. Very often the evil kingdom is Egypt. Even the great Pharaoh of the days of Moses was spoken of as a sea dragon.

***KJV Ezekiel 29:3 Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.***

I switched to the KJV here because it agrees with other scholarly translations while the CJB took great liberties with the same passage by assigning the word "crocodile" instead of dragon or monster to the Hebrew word *tanniym*. Thus the symbolic meaning of the sea from which comes the sea beast is that the beast is emerging from an ocean of wicked nations and wicked peoples. That Egypt is the emblem throughout the Bible for a wicked nation that oppresses God's people makes this meaning even more informative because Egypt is a remnant not only of the Roman Empire but also of the earlier Greek Empire (and the Greek Empire was symbolized in Daniel by a Leopard, and the Leopard is the primary physical characteristic of the Sea Beast).

So let's talk a bit about the fatal wound given to the sea beast. First, the wound would ONLY have been fatal to but 1 of the 7 heads (as the verse clearly says). Thus only 1 of the 7 heads would have potentially died; not the entirety of the sea beast. So the 7 heads have to represent 7 separate people or institutions or entities of some sort. But somehow that particular person or entity survived and because of their miraculous recovery the world believed that what was probably a person (a great national leader) was either superhuman or supernatural. Note how this fatal wound and recovery from it mimics the death and supernatural resurrection of Christ.

However many modern commentators believe that what John was alluding to was the hated Roman Emperor Nero. Late in his reign, perhaps 20 years before John wrote Revelation, Nero had his throat cut on the authority of the Roman senate and he died. However a rumor spread that he had miraculously survived and escaped to Parthia. Many people, including his enemies, expected him to return, alive, and with an army to regain his throne. Playing upon that expectation, a few months later an imposter appeared who claimed to be a resurrected Nero and he gathered a following who wanted to put him back in charge of the Empire. However he was quickly hunted down and killed.

Of course the bulk of the Bible commentators who accept this bit of history as to what John was alluding to are not Believers, but rather are merely Bible "experts" and few believe in the spiritual, miraculous, or the prophetic. Nevertheless from John's perspective what he is speaking about is the future, and is not something from the past.

Now back to the sea beast with the 10 crowns on his 10 horns. Horns are usually symbols of great political powers; that is, governments of nations. And the crowns indicate kings of those nations. The belief among Evangelical Christian writers and theologians has been, since not too long after WWII, that the prophesied 10 nations are a confederation of 10 European states because Winston Churchill recommended and predicted such a political organization that was designed to stop the endless series of devastating intra-European wars. The European Union was created in 1993 and began with, indeed, 10 nations. So, for some this was proof positive that the sea beast is the European union, out of which will come the Anti-Christ.... I find that to be highly unlikely. For one reason, the EU today consists not of 10 nations, but of 28 member states. And part of the reason for the belief that this passage in Revelation is prophetic of the European Union is because the belief is that overall the sea beast represents a revived Roman Empire based on the unnamed 4th beast of Daniel 7, and that the sea beast is a composite of those 4 nations represented by Daniel's 4 beasts. Thus Daniel's 4 beasts are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and finally Rome. While I fully agree with the identification of those 4 empires

as being represented by Daniel's 4 beasts, I am doubtful about the 10 nations represented by the sea beast's 10 horns being the EU. Rome (the capital of the Roman Empire), being in Italy, today only has any real power, or any future prospect of power, from the religious sphere and not the political or economic spheres; and that power I speak of is in the Vatican, which is the capital of the Catholic Church. And I can't see the Catholic Church as a future world **political** power or anything that could resemble a future world empire.

Rather (while acknowledging that world conditions can turn on a dime) if we were to look today to find a 10 nation confederacy that hates Israel and its people, out of which an Anti-Christ could arise, we'd be better to look at Middle Eastern Muslim nations. One reason that we should at least be open to that possibility is that Egypt, the long standing biblical epitome of a nation that hates Israel and oppresses Israel, could easily be in some way involved in a 10 Muslim nation confederacy that represents the Sea Beast. For another reason, while Westerners and Christians see Islam as purely a religion, in fact Islam is also a government system with the goal of governing the globe. Thus Islam is as much political as it is religious. With that thought in mind, let's take a small detour here since one of the enduring topics among Christians is who this predicted all-important 10 nation confederacy of anti-Semite nations might be, out of which comes the Anti-Christ. To address this I'm going to borrow heavily from a lecture I gave on one of the tours I led to Israel several years ago.

The international borders of today's nations in the Middle East are on the verge of being redefined according to a biblical pattern into ten national divisions (along with an eleventh division called "Assyria" which will arise out of Iraq sometime after the USA leaves it). The world will NOT allow Israel, even as the result of a war they might not start, to assume occupation or control over the present national areas called Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and those regions governed under the present Palestinian Authority that itself is currently fractured into separate governments (one in Gaza under Hamas, the other in the so-called West Bank under Fattah). The Scriptures seem to indicate that these various territories will actually be divided into smaller states.

When this political division of ten national states is realized (the ultimate land for peace deal) a period of peace and prosperity will develop for the entire region that will make it the envy of the world. This will occur when those ten small political divisions also unite together in a way the European Union had always envisioned for itself, but has never come close to achieving. All of this is shown in several prophecies of the Holy Scriptures, but it is pinpointed in detail in Psalm 83 — a Psalm describing a political confederacy of ten small nations around Israel on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean. When this new political arrangement becomes evident, peace and prosperity will come to the Middle East. It will only last for a divinely ordained period of time.

### **READ PSALM 83**

While we need to take seriously what these prophecies state will actually happen, we first need to recognize an essential point. The Philistines are mentioned prominently in prophetic contexts dealing with the Day of the Lord (a period yet future to us). Much is written about them in prophecies that have not yet taken place: Zephaniah 2:4–7; Zechariah 9:5–7; and Psalm 83.

In Psalm 83, in particular, the Philistines are reckoned as one of ten nations that design an attack on the land of Israel to destroy the people of Israel and thus bring an end to the nation of Israel. That prophecy in Psalm 83 **has not yet occurred** in history, and the Philistines will be very much involved in helping to fulfill it! That's right. There are prophesied to be ten nations in the Middle East that confederate together in an effort to send the nation of Israel into oblivion.

Besides Psalm 83, there is another section of Scripture that speaks of a confederacy of peoples that will be evident at the End of the Age just before the second advent of Christ. This confederacy is mentioned in the Book of Daniel chapters 2 and 7. It is entirely possible that the ten specifically named nations of Psalm 83 are the same as those implied by Daniel, as opposed to what many today think is a European based union of nations called the EU.

Since the Philistines are front and center in these End Times predictions then a proper recognition of who the Philistines are today is necessary for the identification of all the peoples mentioned in the biblical prophecies. The first reference we have to the Philistines is in the Table of Nations recorded in Genesis chapter 10 (and repeated in 1 Chronicles chapter 1). It states something very important; it is that they had their origin from the same ancestor as the early Egyptians (Mizraim, Genesis 10:13–14).

The fact is that not only is the word "Palestine" Greek for "Philistine", but a great deal of the modern Palestinians are (as their very name suggests) descendants of the ancient Philistines, who themselves are descendants of the founder of Egypt. God recognizes that some of the people are of mixed ethnic characteristics (note Zechariah 9:6), but this biblical indication does not mean that the main people are disqualified from being "Philistines."

What does all this mean? In Psalm 83 we have a graphic description of ten separate nations (peoples) surrounding the nation of Israel. In our time those nations would all be Muslim nations. The account in this Psalm has NEVER occurred in history. The end of the Psalm relates how the events described will lead up to YHVH being most high over all the earth. The time setting of Psalm 83 is shown by its position in the Book of Psalms. The Psalm describes a time just before the Kingdom of God is established over all the earth. Since this is true, we may have a prime prophecy revealing who the ten nations are in Daniel and Revelation. This reference in Psalm 83 is a significant key to End-Time events that all prophetic interpreters should recognize and not just remain fixated on what is proving to be a dead end: that the EU is the 10 nation confederacy from which comes the Anti-Christ.

So while what I have presented to you can in no way be thought of as iron-clad proof nor will it settle the debate, it has to be considered (at least from the worldview of 2019) as a reasonable, plausible, biblically sound candidate to identify the make-up of the 10 nation confederation symbolized by the Sea Beast, and at the present time is more likely than any European Union. So with that to ponder, let's move on.

It is always wise to look back at what the earliest Church Fathers had to say about biblical matters, and especially about the Book of Revelation, because they were unencumbered by today's political correctness and they were far closer to the time the Bible was written.

Caesarius of Arles, a Church Father who lived in the late 400's A.D. and was a Bishop in what is today called France, said this about the identification of the Sea Beast.

***"And the dragon gave him his power", for we see how the heretics, who have the power of the devil, are powerful in this world. For just as formerly it was the pagans that devastated the Church, so now it is the heretics.***

So for Caesarius, the Sea Beast are Church heretics. Victorinus of Petovium, who lived in the 200's A.D., had this to say about the subject in his Commentary on the Apocalypse:

***God will send a king worthy of those who are worthy of him, namely, the Jews and those who persecute Christ, and he will send him as a christ such as the persecutors and the Jews deserve..... to be sure, he would not be able to seduce the people of the circumcision were he not to pose as a defender of The Law.***

Thus Victorinus seeing the Sea Beast as primarily the Anti-Christ says that the Anti-Christ will pose as a defender of the Law of Moses. He does not claim that the Anti-Christ will actually be a Jew, but only that he may pose as a Jew or at least a person who convinces the Jewish people that he believes that the Law of Moses remains valid.

Tyconius who lived in the 300's A.D. gives us his view on the Sea Beast.

***"One of its heads" refers to the Anti-Christ, because there are seven heads not in regard to number but as a sign of the universality of that earthly kingdom that is hostile to the Lamb.***

So Tyconius sees the 7 heads of the Sea Beast as symbolic of all the nations that Satan will deceive, of course implying that the number will be much greater than 7. I've given you but a small sampling of what the Early Church Fathers thought about the Anti-Christ and the Sea Beast, and those views remain as among the most popular views still held in the 21st century. The fact that so many views exist even from the earliest beginnings of the Church will again prove as a caution for us. Your view and my view of what the actual fulfillment of currently unfulfilled prophecies may look like must be held lightly because all we can see is from our very narrow slice of time in the history of the world. World conditions can change rapidly in the modern era and we could easily be incorrect about what we think the many symbols of Revelation reveal when the time for their revealing arrives.

I will repeat something I said at the outset of today's discussion because it is so central to understanding the dragon, the sea beast, and the land beast. It is that Satan is out to mimic and to mock God. Thus when in verse 4, for example, those who worship the Sea Beast chant "Who is like the Beast?", it is mimicking and mocking the Archangel Michael who fought the battle against Satan in Heaven and prevailed (thus kicking Satan out of Heaven). This is because Michael's Hebrew name is ***Mikha'el*** and his name means "Who is like God?"

So when in verses 5 and 6 we're told that the Sea Beast was given a mouth to speak blasphemies against the Lord, then we can see that these blasphemies are in the form of

mimicking and mocking God and we've already seen examples of this. But surprisingly we also informed in verse 7 that the Sea Beast has been allowed by God to make war against God's followers and to defeat them. This defeat will be nearly universal because this will affect every tribe, people, language, and nation..... everyone on planet Earth... with one notable exception, which we're told about in verse 8. Only those whose names are written in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb will be exempt: Believers. Even so, the ominous words of verses 9 and 10 make it clear that what it means to not be defeated by Satan and his Sea Beast is that our faith and thus our place in Heaven will remain intact, while others who may profess some level of belief in Christ will lose even that. Our Savior warned us about that day that is ahead.

**<sup>CJB</sup>Matthew 7:21-27 <sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants. <sup>22</sup> On that Day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'"**

**<sup>24</sup> "So, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on bedrock. <sup>25</sup> The rain fell, the rivers flooded, the winds blew and beat against that house, but it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand."**

**<sup>27</sup> The rain fell, the rivers flooded, the wind blew and beat against that house, and it collapsed- and its collapse was horrendous!"**

So check your faith. Yeshua says that the measure He will use isn't in merely saying you believe in Him; it isn't in how many Church events you attend or how pious you seem. It is in the doing of what the Father says to do. It is in obedience. Even so, staying absolutely true to the Lord by no means says that we'll be spared suffering or imprisonment or death by the actions of the Anti-Christ and those who are subordinate to him; in fact, we ought to expect it.

We'll continue in Chapter 13 next week.