

The Beast And His Prophet

Revelation 13 Notes

The Beast Out Of The Sea (vss. 1-10)

- The ancient Hebrews were not seafarers, but an agricultural people. From their point of view the sea was an awesome and fearful part of creation from whence came storms and destructive forces which filled them with awe. Daniel 7 is probably the most helpful passage in interpreting John's use of "the sea," and the one upon which his vision rests. From the prophet's use of the word, it seems clear that the sea symbolizes the human societies or nations with their stormy upheavals, out of which the empires of earth arise. The beast is described as having "ten horns," symbolizing fullness of power, and "seven heads," indicating completeness of intelligence and wisdom. This beast had a totally irreverent attitude toward God and all that is sacred.
- The beast out of the sea is the fourth beast of Daniel's vision (Daniel 7:7-12). The beast of John's vision is a synthesis or an embodiment of Daniel's first three. This is a plain introduction of the Roman Empire as an instrument of Satan's diabolical and blasphemous power, cruelty and opposition to God's kingdom.
- Many views of vs. 3 are prevalent; however, the "deadly wound" is probably the death of Nero, the first emperor to persecute the church, whose policy of persecution was revived by Domitian, in whom the "deadly wound was healed." The death of Nero dealt a severe blow to the empire. The world of the unregenerated people followed the beast, being filled with awe and amazement at it.
- Alienated from God and awed by the power of the beast, against whom none dared to war, the world followed him, rendering homage to the dragon who had given his authority to the beast; for to the world this power seemed invincible. It was an easy transition from worship of the gods to worship of the emperor and the state.
- Whatever the beast does is by God's permission; God allows him to act. The blasphemies fulfill the prophecy of Daniel that a horn would arise among the ten horns "whose look was more stout than his fellows" (Daniel 7:8, 20),
- Not only does the beast wear the names of blasphemy on his seven heads, but he opens his mouth to revile, slander and profane the holy name of God. His tabernacle refers to the church (cf. Philipians 3:20; Ephesians 2:6).

- In the eyes of the world the beast was being victorious, but it was a momentary victory allowed by the Lord. The beast had made war against the witnesses and had overcome them, but only for a moment (11:7, 12). The "little horn" in Daniel's vision seems to represent the persecuting element of the Roman emperors, for not all persecute the church. The beast of John's vision was brought to an end through the judgment executed by the Lamb, in which the beast was cast into the lake of fire (19:19-20).
- Those of the earth, every tribe, people, tongue and nation over whom the beast executes authority, not only obey the emperor, but also pay homage to him by acknowledging him as god. However, there are exceptions, for a clear distinction is made between those who worship him and those whose names are written in the book of life.
- The exhortation embraces what had been taught about the Lamb being slain and the names written in His book from the foundation of the world; it also points to what is about to be said in vs. 10.
- If the saints follow the world's method of warfare by resisting with the sword, they will suffer the world's consequence of such methods. Therefore, they are to accept captivity or the sword; in doing so they clearly demonstrate the patience of the saints and their faith in God to give the victory in His own way.

The Beast Out Of The Earth (vss. 11-18)

- The second beast, which speaks as a dragon, serves the cause of the great dragon, the devil, and he would also speak as the devil, whose word is a lie (John 8:44). This beast represents some aspect of false religion, one of the devil's means of deceiving and seducing people. To the people of John's day, this beast represented paganism in one of its most repulsive forms -- emperor worship.
- Emperor worship was enforced by the imperial power of the sea beast, supported or regulated in Asia by a delegated commune. This beast, symbolizing the proconsul, the political power, and the commune, the religious parliament of the geographical province, backed by the power of the empire, would insist that the earth dwellers worship the state symbolized in the emperor. This worship was emphasized under Domitian, in whom the "deadly wound" was healed.
- Miracles were signs from God affirming the word of His messenger. In contrast to this, the false prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10) must sustain his word and demands by the deception of false, imitation signs; deception is the very power of evil and sin.
- These signs of the beast were false. Signs of deception were meant to impress the heathen populace when the Roman dignitaries and the

provincial governor with the religious hierarchy, the commune, met for religious purpose to dedicate a new image of a Caesar in the temple, or to establish the decrees of religious ritual. This spirit of delusion and deception continues to live in the false religions throughout the world; deception is their breath and life.

- The power of death for those who refused to pay homage to Caesar and Rome rested in the magistrate and religious hierarchy. This put the Christian in the position where he must confess either Christ or Caesar as Lord, thus choosing between immediate death and a few added years of life before eternal death.
- As God had sealed His people unto Himself by impressing His own name and the name of the Lamb upon their foreheads (7:3; 9:4; 14:1), and has promised to write His name upon the foreheads of the victors (3:12; 22:4), so the beast imitates this by requiring all to indicate their allegiance to him by a mark upon their right hand or upon their foreheads. In "causing" this to be done, the beast established a policy which required that they all be marked. The mark itself was probably a stamp of paganism impressed upon the character and conduct of the idolater.
- Whatever the mark was, no one could enter the field of trade or earn a living without it. The saints who refused the mark even at the risk of death, were boycotted by the world, being discriminated against even to the point of hunger or possible starvation.
- A peculiar application of numbers in vogue among later Jews and early Christians, *Gematria*, is the use of the letters of a word so as by means of their combined numerical value to express a name. Of the many efforts to reduce the 666 to the name of a man, the most popular choice has been Nero Caesar, which in the Greek is Neron Kaisar. However, the number probably does not represent an individual per se, but the sum of that which is human. When six was tripled, it meant complete doom and failure.