

WEEK 17: CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 13

- “Chapter 13 engages the discussion of two means by which the dragon attempts to disrupt the work and worship of God and to inflict on his followers such hardship and sorrows as to cause them, if possible, to abandon allegiance to Christ or, at least in the case of unbelievers, to prevent their acquiescence to the gospel message.”¹
- The dragon in our study is Satan himself. He is the fallen angel who took 1/3 of the angels with him when he rebelled in heaven.
- We are going to be introduced to two new characters who are called upon to wreak more havoc on the earth and against God’s people.
- The beast who comes out of the sea is the antichrist.
- The beast who comes out of the earth is the false prophet.
- These 3, Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet form what is referred to as the Unholy Trinity or the Satanic Anti-Trinity.
 - Satan attempts to mimic God as he coordinates all that is happening and seeks to establish his worldwide power.
 - The antichrist is the visible one who is the incarnate political ruler who is going to *seemingly* come back from the dead. He seeks to imitate Jesus.
 - The false prophet does not seek any worship for himself, but points people to worship and show their devotion toward the antichrist. He is mimicking the God the Holy Spirit.
- We must always keep in mind that Satan is the great deceiver, and his best is simply to mimic God to try and either pull people away from God or keep God’s children under spiritual oppression.
- Important to keep in mind as we work through this chapter and the rest of the book. These are no just ideas or concepts. They are not symbols or abstract forces or multiple names for the same evil entity.
- These are 3 separate people who seek to mimic the divine roles of the Holy Trinity.
- **Revelation 20:10** “And *the devil* who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where *the beast* and *the false prophet* are also; and *they* will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”
- How many different people are represented here in the final judgment? There are 3 distinct people.

¹ Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 272.

CHAPTER 13:1-10 ~ THE ANTICHRIST

Revelation 13:1-10 “And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. {2} And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. {3} I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; {4} they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" {5} There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. {6} And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. {7} It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. {8} All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. {9} If anyone has an ear, let him hear. {10} If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints..”

- Remember that during the Tribulation period, the world will be longing for someone to rise up and lead them. There is chaos and complete disharmony among all the people. It is a ripe time for a leader.
- As the leader rises up, it will be far too late to realize what is happening.
 - “But he will turn out to be far more than the world bargained for. He will be a dictator more cruel and powerful than any other leader the world has ever known. This man...will be the culmination of a long line of would-be world conquerors. What men like Alexander the Great and the Roman emperors in ancient times and Hitler and Stalin in modern times only dreamed of doing, the Antichrist will actually do – he will rule the entire world and receive its worship.”²
- As the dragon or Satan is standing by the sea...this sea is most likely the sea of people who will follow the antichrist.
 - **Revelation 17:15** “And he said to me, ‘The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.’”
- “As John watches the scene, he sees a beast coming up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns. Ten crowns are seen on the horns, and on the seven heads names of blasphemy are written.” (Walvoord)
- So, there is a man who is rising out of the crowd of people who is going to rule over them.

² John MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 36.

- He is the antichrist. He is going to be a vicious ruler over the people.
- There have been many antichrists throughout church history, but this is the final antichrist who is going to be possessed by Satan.
- With the reference to the 10 horns, 7 heads, and diadems, this is not just a person but also a world power.
- The 7 heads likely represent the seven consecutive world powers who existed under Satan's dominion: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist's future empire.
 - **Revelation 17:9-10** "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, {10} and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while."
- The 10 horns symbolize power and strength (cf. Ps 18:2; 75:4-5; 92:10) and represent the great power of the kings who will rule under the antichrist's absolute authority.
- The 10 horns refer specifically to 10 kings or nations who will include a revived Roman empire united under the antichrist.
 - **Revelation 17:12** "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour."
- "The monstrosity of seven heads and ten horns probably refers to the remnants of the confederacy which formed the Roman Empire in the beginning, namely, the ten nations of which three were overthrown by the little horn of Daniel 7:8. The ten crowns, therefore, refer to the diadems or symbols of governmental authority. The fact that they have the names of blasphemy ("names" is properly plural) indicates their blasphemous opposition to God and to Christ." (Walvoord)
- The antichrist is going to mimic Jesus and call himself God; just like the other Roman emperors did.
 - Daniel tells us more about this future king in Daniel 8:23-25 "In the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. {24} His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; he will destroy mighty men and the holy people. {25} And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency."
- This antichrist will have superhuman power and influence over the world and their rulers.
- John further describes the beast *like* a leopard (he uses like 3 times to describe the beast).
- "The selection of these three animals is related to the similar revelation given in Daniel 7, where the successive world empires are described by the lion, referring to Babylon, the bear, referring to Medo-Persia, and the leopard, referring to the Alexandrian Empire." (Walvoord)

- The lion (Babylon) represents power, the bear (Medo-Persian) strength, and the leopard (Greece) swiftness.
- These attributes are going to make up the final great kingdom during the antichrist's rule as this "fourth empire gathers all these elements and characteristics in itself and is far more dreadful in its power and blasphemy than the preceding empires." (Walvoord)
- The dragon (Satan) is going to be giving the antichrist his power so he will be supernaturally gifted to be able to solve the world's problems and seek the people's worship.
- In **verses 3-4** the beast is wounded with a fatal blow, and the world worships him when he apparently comes back from the dead.
- We know this wound was from a sword. It says in **verse 14** "...had the wound of the sword and has come to life."
- Some have taken this to mean the Roman Empire is going to be slain and come back to life, others see it as the person of the antichrist who is going to fall by the sword and be revived.
 - Remember, this is a future prophecy so it can't be past rulers who have attempted to take over.
- One clue is the personal pronouns used in **verse 3**...*his* fatal wound. This is most likely talking about a man, not an empire at this point. Furthermore, it is more likely that the people who be in awe and wonder over a man coming back to life more than an empire.
- Did he really die and come back? Whether it was staged or God allowed it to happen, it was a counterfeit to the real death and resurrection of Jesus so that the people would be deceived.
- Since this took place right before their eyes, the people will worship him.
 - Remember, not *all* the people worship, **verse 8** "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain."
- This is Satan's goal, to receive the worship which is due to God alone. This is the greatest counterfeit the world has seen as Satan attempts to be like God and the beast like Jesus.
- We are given an insight into the character of the antichrist in **verses 5-6**.
- He is going to speak blasphemies against God and anything that has to do with God.
- This is going to happen for the whole second half, 3 ½ years, of the Tribulation; it was prophesied.
 - **Daniel 7:8** "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts."
 - **Daniel 7:11** "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire."

- We must remember that God is in control, this only takes place for 42 months.
- In **verses 7-10** again, power is given to the antichrist to make war with the saints to overcome them.
 - He couldn't do this if God were not allowing it.
 - To **overcome** them does not mean that "he will have the power to destroy their faith. He will overpower them physically, but not spiritually. Genuine saving faith cannot be destroyed...But Antichrist will slaughter God's people on an unprecedented scale as he expresses his world dominance."³
- He will have complete authority over all the earth (tribe, people, tongue, and nation).
- "The dream of countless rulers in the past of conquering the entire world is here finally achieved by this last Gentile ruler. The dream of world conquest achieved in part by the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires is now for the first time realized completely and is the satanic counterfeit of Christ's millennial reign permitted by God in this final display of the evil of Satan and wicked humanity."
(Walvoord)
 - Again, this is foreseen in **Daniel 7:23** "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.'"
- Not only is there going to be a political and military world domination...there is also going to be a spiritual domination.
- In **verse 8**, those who are not in the book of life of the Lamb, in other words, those who are not born again, they are going to worship.
- This indicates a *one world religion*.
- Nobody knows the actual religion, but it is going to unite all those who are not born again.
- **Verses 9-10** are important...**let him hear**
- Notably, this verse has been difficult to really understand but could be taken in 1 of 2 ways:
 - It could refer to the divine retribution that will come on Antichrist: "After all that has been said about the power of the Beast, verse 10 contains a word of great comfort. The captor will be taken captive; the killer will be killed. When God's purposes are finished through Antichrist, God will take him captive and confine him to the Lake of Fire. Knowing this brings the patience and faith that sustains the saints who endure these persecutions."⁴
 - It could also refer to the Christians alive then and their future captivity and their perseverance which they must hold to when captured.

³ MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 49.

⁴ Charles Ryrie, *Revelation*, 116.

CHAPTER 13:11-18 ~ THE FALSE PROPHET

Revelation 13:11-18 “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. {12} He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. {13} He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. {14} And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. {15} And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. {16} And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, {17} and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either 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 the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.”

- Just like all the other antichrists pointed towards the one final antichrist, so all the false prophets point to the final false prophet here.
- The primary tactic of Satan is lying and deceiving people...that is exactly what we read here.
- “The false religious system, which was supported in this way imitated the divine Trinity. Satan seeks to take the place of God the Father; the first beast assumes the place of Jesus Christ, the Son, the King of kings; and the second beast, the false prophet, has a role similar to the Holy Spirit who causes Christians to worship God. This is Satan’s final attempt to substitute a false religion for true faith in Christ.” (Walvoord)
- “While Antichrist will be primarily a political and military ruler, he will also claim to be God. The false prophet will be his high priest, the religious leader who will lead people into the satanic religion of worshipping Antichrist. The false prophet will deify Antichrist and convince unbelievers that he is the only hope for the world’s salvation...He may well be the most eloquent, powerful, convincing speaker in human history, and his lofty oratory will persuade the world to worship Antichrist.”⁵
- Again, we have a beast, like the first one (remember *like*, as in “another of the same kind”) who is coming from the earth, not the sea.
- He has two horns, most likely indicating that he is less powerful than the antichrist.

⁵ MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 56-57.

- “The description of him as a lamb seems to indicate that he has a religious character, a conclusion supported by his being named a prophet. His speaking as a dragon indicates that he is motivated by the power of Satan who is “the dragon.” (Walvoord)
- “False prophets often appear meek, mild, and harmless. They offer hope and solutions to the problems troubling men and women. Yet they are ever the voices of hell, and when they open their mouths, Satan speaks. So it will be amid the unspeakable horrors of the Tribulation. The false prophet will come like a lamb, speaking false, deceptive words of comfort. He will promise the suffering, tormented people of the world that all will be well if only they will worship Antichrist.”⁶
- In **verses 12-15** there is a description of this false prophet.
- He has all the authority of the first beast and makes the people worship the first beast.
 - He doesn’t promote himself but points people to the antichrist for worship.
- He performs great signs so that the people can see all that he does.
 - Satan can perform signs (under God’s sovereign control) to mimic God.
 - **Exodus 7:11-12** “Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. {12} For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.”
- He will deceive the world and convince them to make an image of the beast for worship.
 - This is done to fulfill God’s judgment upon those who are following Satan.
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12** “...and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. {11} For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, {12} in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”
 - “Specifically, unbelievers will be deceived by Antichrist and perish because **they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved**. The phrase **the love of the truth** appears only here in the New Testament, and adds a compelling thought to Paul’s argument. The unregenerate are eternally lost, not because they did not hear or understand the truth, but because they did not **love** it. The Bible clearly teaches that those who go to hell do so because they reject the truth.”⁷
 - “The terrifying reality is that God will seal the fate of those who hate the gospel by sending **upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false**. Though, as noted above, Antichrist will deceive people with satanically empowered false miracles, signs, and wonders, his deception only will succeed because it fits into God’s sovereign purpose. He will sentence

⁶ MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 56-57.

⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002), 283.

unbelievers to accept evil as if it were good and lies as if they were the truth. Those who continually choose falsehood will be inextricably caught by it.”⁸

- In **verse 15**, part of the deception is to give life to the image. Whether this is real or not, it is going to play a huge role in deceiving the people into worshipping the antichrist.
- “With today’s amazing special effects technology and robotics, that is not out of the realm of possibility. Add to that the world’s desperate need, amid the carnage of the Tribulation, to believe in a death conqueror, and the ruse becomes very believable.”⁹
- Finally, in **verses 16-18** the true plan of the beast comes to the forefront. He wants all people to take his mark as a sign of worship to him.
 - Some have thought this is response to the seal of the Holy Spirit on believers but also the sealing of the 144,000 Jews.
 - Again, this is a counterfeit so that the world is now divided between those who take the mark and worship the beast and those who do not have any marks.
- The consequences are going to be fatal either way...to choose the mark is to suffer the consequences of worshipping the beast. Not to take the mark is to suffer the consequences of not being able to buy or sell. In other words, they will not be able to conduct business and perhaps sustain life as they know it.
- “The mark itself seems to vary according to verse 17 as in some cases being the name of the beast and in others the number of his name. There is no need for a complicated explanation. The mark is simply a token that they are beast worshipers, and it serves as an identification necessary to conduct business and to purchase the necessities of life. It is another device to force all people to worship the beast.” (Walvoord)
- Many attempts have been made to find out what this number, 666, means. While we truly don’t know, it is best to remember that it is future. We may be able to have chips in our hands to pay for goods at the store right now, but it is certainly not the mark of the beast.
- “Probably the simplest explanation here is the best, that the triple six is the number of a man, each digit falling short of the perfect number seven. Six in the Scripture is man’s number. He was to work six days and rest the seventh. The image of Nebuchadnezzar was sixty cubits high and six cubits broad. Whatever may be the deeper meaning of the number, it implies that this title referring to the first beast, Satan’s masterpiece, limits him to man’s level which is far short of the deity of Jesus Christ.” (Walvoord)

⁸ Ibid., 284.

⁹ MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 62.