

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 3/17/10 Wednesday Evening

Series: *A Walk through the Book of Revelation*

Revelation 13 "The Enemy Responds: The Dragon and the Beasts," part 2

Hostile. That's the word that sums up the world's treatment of Christ's followers all around the planet. Why is that? We find the answer in today's text.

The book of Revelation records the future events associated with the second coming of Jesus Christ. Beginning in chapter 6 we encounter a description of the severe judgments that the Lord is going to pour out on the world.

When we arrive at chapters 12-13 we see the response of the enemy to the Living God and His people. Last time we looked at chapter 12, and a quick review is in order as we prepare for the new material in chapter 13.

**Review: The Highlights of chapter 12 -- Five scenes...**

I. Scene #1: John sees a pregnant woman (1-2).

- A. She's clothed with the sun.
- B. She's wearing a crown of twelve stars.
- C. She's about to give birth.

II. Scene #2: John sees an enormous, red dragon (3-6).

- A. He's powerful (3).
- B. He wanted to kill the child (4).
- C. His plot failed (5-6).
  - 1. The child was snatched up to God.
  - 2. The woman fled to the desert for 1,260 days.

III. Scene #3: John describes an angelic war in heaven (7-9).

- A. Michael and his angels fought the dragon and his angels (7).
- B. The dragon lost and was hurled to the earth (8-9).
- C. The identity of the dragon is clarified (9)...
  - 1. He's the ancient serpent.
  - 2. He is called the devil, or Satan.
  - 3. He is the one who leads the world astray.

IV. Scene #4: John records the reaction of heaven (10-12).

- A voice announces the significance of the victory...
  - A. God's kingdom has come (10).
  - B. The accuser has been hurled down (10b).
  - C. The key to the dragon's defeat is identified (11).
  - D. What is gain for heaven will result in pain for the earth (12).

V. Scene #5: John records the reaction of the defeated dragon (13-17).

- A. The dragon pursued the woman (13).
- B. The woman fled to a prepared place for three and one-half "times" (14).
- C. The dragon tried to destroy the woman, but failed (15-16).
- D. The dragon then sought to make war against the woman's offspring (17).

That's where we left off. The opposition continues in chapter 13...

### **New Material: The Opposition in chapter 13...**

In chapter 13 John describes two beasts that work in conjunction with the dragon.

Q: What is the dragon doing as the chapter begins? Verse 1 (note: The KJV says, "And *I* stood upon the sand of the sea." Other versions state, "And *he* stood," a reference to the dragon).

#### VI. Scene #6: John sees a beast (1-10).

**\*\*This Beast came out of the sea.**

Who is this beast? The image seems to refer to some individual or authority structure. Some suggest this is the Anti-christ. Others conjecture the beast symbolizes the Roman empire, the "deification of secular authority (*NIV sb*)."

The word "Antichrist" doesn't appear in the book of Revelation, but only in John's epistles (1 John 2:18, 22; etc).

Note: In 17:8-11 an angel gives a helpful explanation.

#### A. Here are his identifying marks (1-4).

##### 1. *His appearance (1):*

⇒He had ten horns and seven heads.

⇒He wore ten crowns on his horns.

Compare the description of the beast with that of the dragon in 12:3. Both have ten horns and seven heads, a feature which shows their singularity in purpose. The dragon (the devil) is the one who will energize the beast. One difference--the dragon has seven crowns on his heads, while the beast has ten crowns on his horns.

⇒He had a blasphemous name on his heads.

This individual will claim himself to be God. There have been plenty of individuals who have done so in the past, particularly in the Roman Empire. Several emperors stamped the title DIVUS on coins to assert their deity. Domitian (AD 81-96) demanded that he be addressed by the title, *Dominus et Deus*--Lord and God.

##### 2. *His resemblance (2):*

⇒He looked like a leopard.

⇒He had feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion.

Note: John's vision is similar to Daniel's (see Dan 7:4-6)

##### 3. *His source of power (2b):*

⇒The dragon gave the beast his power, throne, and authority.

##### 4. *His influence (3-4):*

Q: What happened to this beast?

⇒He recovered from a fatal wound.

Key: The wording here is the same as that in 5:6 in reference to the Lamb who actually was slain.

⇒The whole world followed him.

⇒Men worshiped the dragon because of him.

⇒Men also worshiped the beast.

Note: This beast seems to be a pawn of the dragon.

B. Here is what the beast received (5-10).

1. *He was given a mouth (5-6).*

⇒He uttered proud words and blasphemies (5).

This fits the prediction given in Daniel 7 where we read of a "little horn" which had a mouth "speaking great things" and "words against the Most High."

⇒He blasphemed God, God's name, God's dwelling place, and God's people in heaven (6).

Verse 6 refers to those "who live in heaven." Is this a reference to the saints or angelic beings?

2. *He was given power (7a).*

3. *He was given authority (7b).*

Q: Over what? Notice that he will be allowed, by God's sovereignty, to have control of the whole world.

4. *He was given worship (8).*

Q: From whom? "All inhabitants."

Q: Who did NOT worship him? Those whose names were "written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb"

Note: We see the passive "was given" four times in the Greek text of verses 5-7. That's significant. This beast doesn't have inherent authority, but derived authority.

Discuss: How does that insight affect you?

C. Here is how we are to respond (9-10).

1. *Hear (9).*

2. *Resolve to endure and be faithful (10).*

See: The same call is repeated in 14:12.

Observation: Though I support the Pre-tribulational rapture position, I have concerns as I mentioned last time about the line of reasoning that goes like this, "I believe in the Pre-trib position because I don't think God would allow His people to suffer tribulation like there will be in the Tribulation period."

The fact is this. God is going to save people during the Tribulation period. And God is going to allow them to suffer severely. Indeed, *many* will.

Q: What message does John give to the saints in verse 10? What's needed? Patient endurance and faithfulness.

## VII. Scene #7: John sees another beast (11-18).

**\*\*This Beast came out of the earth.**

The second beast is the servant of the first. He compels men to worship the first. He seems to represent "organized religion" according to Ladd (182). The *NIVsb* suggests he symbolizes "religious power in the service of secular authorities."

### A. Here are his identifying marks (11).

1. He had two horns like a lamb.

Q: Who do we usually associate with the "Lamb?" Christ. This being tries to present himself as a religious "Savior." Ladd suggests he is a "parody of Christ--religion prostituted for evil ends."

2. He spoke like a dragon.

Discussion: Respond to the statement, "Satan is a friend of religion." How so?

### B. Here is what he did (12-17).

1. He promoted the first beast (12).

2. He performed miraculous signs (13).

Can Satan do miracles? Indeed, he can!

3. He deceived people with his signs (14a).

4. He set up an image in honor of the beast (14b).

Notice something. Satan is an *imitator*. The second beast will set up an image to the first beast--the one who was wounded by the sword and yet lived (14).

What happened to Christ? He was wounded, yet lived. He received a fatal wound, yet came back to life.

What will the beast do? He will be wounded with a fatal wound, yet return to life. And the people of the world will worship him in their delusion.

5. He was given power to energize the image (15).

6. He forced everyone to receive a mark (16-17).

⇒ On the right hand or forehead

⇒ Economic sanctions against those who refused

⇒ The mark is the name of the beast.

### C. Here is how we are to respond (18).

1. Wisdom is needed.

2. Calculate the number of the beast.

See: Quote by Ladd on the number 666

### For Discussion:

1. What kind of impact would this vision have had on John and his first century readers?
2. Why does God want us to know that these two "personages" (the two "beasts") are coming?
3. Who is the very next person John saw in his vision? see 14:1 The Lamb! And where is He standing? On Mount Zion.