



Last study, we ended with a little peek into Rev 13. This week, we'll be diving right in and unpacking some of this amazing vision. And I can promise that even though it's in the N.T., and written hundreds of years after the subject of our last studies in Daniel, we'll recognize some similarities. But before we dive in, we need to establish some things that will help us as we read Revelation. Some tools, to give us clarity.



This is a type of fishing reel that has backlash and gotten all tied up in knots. This can ruin your fishing trip, and sometimes it can take a long time to untangle those knots. It can be so frustrating that a lot of folks just cut the line and re-string it. That fishing reel is

a great analogy of how the Book of Revelation can be. It's all tied up in knots and frustrating to untangle. It takes time, patience and understanding. We may not get clarity on the entire book, but we can certainly untangle some of it, with the right tools...



The most important thing for us to know and keep in mind when we study the book of Revelation is that there are some obstacles to overcome in our

understanding of this Book. Kinda like locks designed to keep out trespassers. But these obstacles are also the very keys that open the locks and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the Truth to us.

1- **It's written in symbolic imagery**, so if we try to view it with a literal interpretation, we can easily lose sight of what's being revealed, which can then lead us into a misunderstanding.

2- **It's written in circular time**, not linear, which means that it moves from what HAS happened in the past, to what IS happening in the present, to what WILL happen in the future, and then back again, and sometimes even simultaneously. And remember, some of the things that are in John's future as he wrote the book, are in our past as we read the book.

3- **It's written in parallel prophecy form**, meaning a large percentage of the Book of Revelation is really a sort of repeat of previous prophecies given in other books of the Bible, but with more detail. The same way that Daniel interpreted a dream about a statue, then had a dream about 4 beasts, then had another dream about a goat and a ram, and all those were about the same subject. They were parallel prophecies.

Let's look at some examples really quick...

1- It's written in symbolic imagery

Revelation 1:16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This is an easy example to see of this point. The verse in Revelation 1 is a description of Christ standing before John.

While John may have prophetically seen a sword coming out of His mouth, we can see that it's really a symbolic image of the Living Word of God speaking the written Word of God. A literal sword just wouldn't make much sense. In fact, the entire description of Christ mentioned in Rev 1 is symbolic, meaning every characteristic has a deep spiritual meaning. That'll be something we can study together in the future. It has a lot of those Remez, or hints we learned about in past studies.

2- It's written in circular time

***Revelation 1:19** Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.*

Here's another easy example to see. Right at the beginning of the Book, we're told that John was instructed to write what WAS, what IS, and what IS TO COME. Not necessarily in that order.

3- It's written in parallel prophecy form

***Revelation 1:12** Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,*

***Zechariah 4:2** And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.*

If we removed the book and chapter from these two scriptures and just left the verses, it would seem like they were part of the same verse in the same book. This example is able to be seen, but some aren't so clear at first. That's because this key is a little more difficult to use. It requires us to really invest some time in studying the Word, especially the O.T. Amazingly, we can find examples of the parallel prophecy key in many places we'd never suspect. For instance, the infamous 4 Horsemen can be found in the book of Zechariah, we just need to know what to look for.

An interesting fact is that almost 70% of Revelation is either taken directly from other prophecies in the Bible, or touch on different prophecies of the Bible. The reason this book is a blessing to those who read and hear it, is because it gathers all the jewels God has hidden in other parts of the Bible and brings them all together to make one big treasure that paints the really big picture for us.

You'll notice that every one of the examples we've looked at so far comes from the very first chapter of Revelation. That's not a coincidence. Christ gives us the keys to understanding this book as soon as it opens and sets the standard for the rest of it.

We have one last example before we move on. It's easy to see all 3 keys in this example. It may surprise you, because it's one of those famous subjects that many folks have heard about in the Book of Revelation, the TWO WITNESSES...

Revelation 11:3-4 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

Zechariah 4:11-14 Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" 12 And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" 13 Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." 14 So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."



We can see the symbolic imagery, with the olive trees and the lampstands. And yes, even those numbers, 1260 days, are symbolic and prophetic. We'll get to that... in the future. But for now...

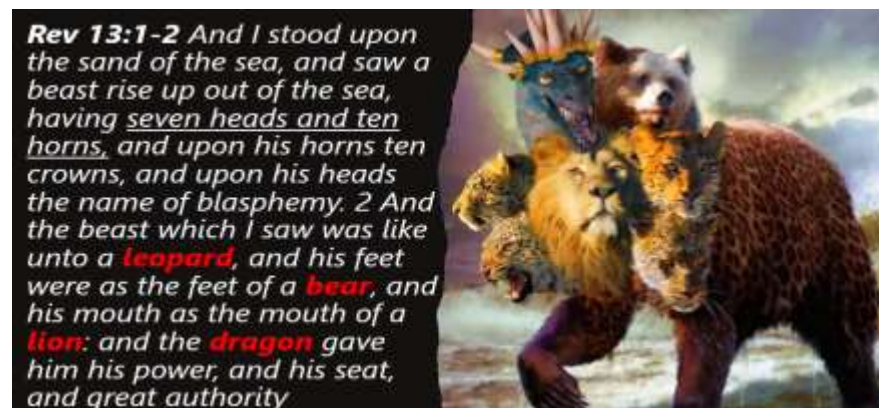
We can see the circular time, with how Rev 11 reaches right back to the end of Zech 4, after Rev chapter 1 reached to the beginning of Zech 4.

We can see the parallelism with the visions being about the same subject matter, but from slightly different perspectives, like there's two different people describing the same thing. Probably because that's exactly what happened.

Now, regarding this particular part of the vision, there's a lot of conjecture on who these two witnesses are, and the way we see them often depends on how we've been taught. We won't get into that in this study, but let's expand our view just a little and suggest that instead of trying to figure out WHO the two witnesses are, we instead maybe shift our perspective and consider WHAT the witnesses are.

Maybe they aren't people at all, just like those horns in the other prophecies weren't really horns, maybe these 2 olive trees that grow olives, that produce oil and these 2 Lampstands that produce light from that same oil, are something else. Maybe these 2 witnesses and 2 testifiers of God's Word are something that we haven't unraveled just yet.

Ok, we've got the keys and we've laid the foundation, now let's jump to the "main course" of this study...



Over the course of the last studies, we've become very familiar with the language and imagery used here. One of the goals I hope we can

accomplish with these studies is to de-mystify the Book of Revelation. For many different reasons, it's been treated like a creepy family member that never shows up to the family reunion, "We don't talk about cousin Eddie, stay away from him, he's a weirdo"!

My prayer is that through these studies, we can remove some of the stigma, the enigma, and even the fear associated with the last Book of the Bible. It's a little book, with a very big message, so there's a lot we don't understand yet, but what little bit we can understand we'll try to dig into and unravel, or at least loosen the knots a little. In that way, we can all grow and be blessed by reading and hearing this prophecy of prophecies.

Alright, so the first two verses of this chapter introduce us to a beast. But this is a beast that has familiar features to us. Do you know that a leopard can't change its spots? And this beast, even though it changes its form many times, can't change its identity.

Rev 13 has reached into Daniel 7 and brought back the 4 beasts, but now they're all mashed together into one beast. But doesn't that make sense? You see, when God gave Daniel this vision, it was far into the future for him, with each empire rising after the other. But when God shows John the same vision, those 4 empires have already risen up and joined together into one empire, ROME. The same wickedness and evil spirit that possessed and motivated the other empires, is also present and possesses this beast. In fact, you could say that this is its true form being revealed. The monster behind the curtain.

Rev 13:3-4 *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. ⁴ And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*

There're a few things that make Rev difficult to understand, even with the 3 keys.

For one, the perspective keeps changing. For some verses, John's perspective will be from his present, looking forward into the future, and for other verses he'll be placed in the perspective of the future and looking back into the past. It could be the same event or subject, but from different angles of time. That's the circular time we learned about.

Another difficulty is that the appearance of the subject keeps changing. The same way that the subject of the statue in Daniel 2 changed into 4 beasts in Daniel 7. That's those parallel prophecies. Rev has many examples that are parallel, not only with other prophecies in the Bible, but with prophecies in the book of Rev itself. The same subject, but a different appearance.

A big obstacle that I didn't mention before, is history. That's because it's more of a magnifying glass than a key. As we've seen, history can help us understand prophecy much better. But, that's only when the history of a subject is able to be seen. When reading Rev, sometimes we're missing the history that would give us better vision. Not because we overlooked it, but because it just isn't there, at least not anymore.

For instance, if the Bible were to mention secret societies in prophecy, (and I'm not saying it does specifically), then it would be very difficult to see because our historical point of reference would be hidden. However, if we're good students and we diligently seek, Christ told us we would find. He has still given us enough clues in history and His Word to point us in the right direction, even if the enemy hid it from us.

Keeping all that in mind, let's try to unravel these 2 verses. From our last studies, we learned that the Roman empire eventually split in two, then the Western division split again into 10 kingdoms. The beginnings of that split happened in the year 330 AD, when Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the empire to a city in the East called Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople. He had grown tired of the tension between the pagans and the newly converted Christians. So, like a sword cutting through a melon, he severed the power from Rome, the once mighty city and capital of the

entire world and took all his authority and prestige with him. From that point on, Pagan Rome's days were numbered.

After that move, Rome as a city and empire began to steadily decline. It lost more and more power, while Constantinople grew more and more powerful, eventually becoming the Byzantine Empire. Rome had lost its political power and was all but dead. Then something amazing happened. As it died politically, it was resurrected religiously. As we learned in previous studies, the East had all the political and military power, but the West kept a stranglehold on the religious power, eventually getting so powerful, that even the Byzantine Emperor, and every monarch after, had to seek the approval of the Bishop of Rome to get married, and even recognize him as "The vicar of Christ on earth". That's 'Papal Rome, or "The Pope's Rome". After a time, with no real threat to Rome's religious power, it again gained political power. By the time the Byzantine Empire in the East fell, Papal Rome in the West was once again in power, but now, it was both political and religious.

We'll skip ahead a few verses in this study because it's important for us to see something here, but rest assured, we'll come back to verses 5-10 next week, because we need to learn about those 42 months mentioned in verse 5. But first let's jump to verse 13...

Revelation 13:11-14

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 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



¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴ And he 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.

I've heard this beast called "The False Prophet", and I don't disagree with that description. I've also heard it was symbolic of the U.S., and that view has some valid points and some shortcomings. The fact is, this is one of those visions that can be difficult to unravel, because the Bible doesn't give us a direct interpretation here. God wants us to do our homework. We'll need to use all the keys to unlock it. I'd like to suggest another possible interpretation based on all that we've already learned.

The first beast came out of the sea. In chapter 17, waters are revealed to represent peoples and nations. That first beast coming out of the peoples and nations makes a lot of sense, because that's exactly what happened. But this beast is different, and yet also the same. It exercises the same authority of the first beast. It has the same agenda as the first beast, but instead of rising from the sea, it came from the earth.

The Greek word used for earth is Gai, spelled GE and sometimes pronounced JE, and its where we get the word Geology from. In the concordance, it used as a contrast to Heaven. YHVH is God of both heaven and earth, but Heaven is where He dwells. Earth is where man dwells. Earth is also where death dwells. When we die, our body returns back to the earth.



This is a cicada. We call them locusts in the south. Something interesting about them is that some species can spend 17 years in the ground as a nymph. After hatching and shedding 5 times over 17 years, they emerge from the earth and transform into something completely different looking, but still the same. The same purpose, but a different appearance.

Keeping that cicada's life cycle in mind, imagine John seeing this first beast coming from the sea, with the appearance of fierce predators mashed together. It receives a deadly wound and dies, then miraculously it's healed and "raised from the grave," emerging from the earth as a different beast.

Same purpose, different appearance. It resembles a lamb, but it speaks with the forked tongue of the dragon, full of false fire and lying wonders. It has all the authority of the first beast and it deceives the world into worshipping the first beast, without them even realizing it.

That's the definition of deceived. We are intentionally misled into doing or believing something wrong, without realizing it's wrong. Someone has deceived us. And maybe that someone was deceived by someone else who was also deceived, all the way back to the father of lies, the dragon.

So, here's the other suggestion of how to view this part of the prophecy: Maybe the first beast was the "final form" of what the dragon had hatched all the way back in Nimrod's Babylon. That's why it has the characteristics and power of all those other empires, so that we can recognize it. And the apex of this "final form" was Pagan Rome. When Christ came to set the captives free, the dragon tried to stamp out Christianity from the outside with rulers like Nero, but that didn't work. When Constantine converted to Christianity, it struck a death blow to Pagan Rome, but not the power behind it. So the dragon allowed that form to die, and took a new form that resembled the Lamb of God. And if we aren't paying close attention, even we can be fooled.

Did you know that a lamb doesn't have horns. A sheep does, but a lamb, (which is a baby sheep) doesn't. In fact, the Greek word used here is found 30 times in the whole N.T., and all of them, except for 2, refer directly to Christ as the Lamb of God. One of those 2 refers to His followers as lambs, so it still relates to Christ. That leaves us this strange verse in Rev 13:11. People reading this verse back then, would have noticed the oddity of a baby lamb with horns, but, (unless we're sheep farmers), in our day and age we can read right past that and never consider those two horns of power on that baby lamb.

To bring it all back together, maybe this vision is showing us the "death" of Pagan Rome, with all its fierce heads and horns, and the "birth" of Papal Rome with the appearance of the Lamb of God.

With the two horns of political and religious power, and the forked tongue of the dragon, it deceives the whole world into looking back at the "shell" of Pagan Rome (like that locust shell) and accepting it as master, even though from this point on in the chapter, that first beast is only an image of its former self.



I know this may not line up with what we've always been taught, but it does line up with what we've recently learned with Scripture and history together, so I want to encourage all of us to at least consider the possibility and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the Truth to us as we study.

In the final installment of this series, we'll continue in this chapter and try to gain some understanding of those 42 months, as well as the other mysteries found here. Let's all keep each other in prayer as we move forward unraveling these Dreams of Destruction and Visions of Victory. AMEN.