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Revelation 13

So last time in our study of chapter 12 if you'll remember I told you that over the course of the next three chapters, we would be introduced to seven different characters.

First the woman who represents Israel.

Second the dragon who represents Satan.

Third a male child who refers to Christ.

Fourth Michael who represents the angels.

Fifth Israel, the remnant of the woman's seed.

Sixth is the beast out of the sea who is the world dictator and the antichrist.

And then seventh is the beast out of the earth, who is the false prophet and who turns out to be the religious leader of the world.

And in chapter 12 we met the first five characters. And here in chapter 13 we're going to meet the last two. We're going to be introduced to the beast out of the sea, who is the antichrist himself and the beast out of the earth, who is his counterpart, the false prophet. And they both work along beside and serve Satan.

So if someone would like to read the entire chapter for us and then we'll go back and look at it a few verses at a time.

13 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and

on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. **4** So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. **6** Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. **7** It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. **8** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. **10** He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

And then in verse eleven we’re introduced to the Beast from the Earth.

11 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. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or 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 it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

So when we get to Revelation 13, we're introduced to this first beast rising out of the sea. He has ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and then he has all these blasphemous names written on its heads. And he appeared like a leopard; but he also had feet like a bear, and a mouth like a lion.

Now, no doubt this a strange looking beast. But these characteristics are of course symbolic in nature and describe his many different attributes and we know from other places in the Bible who he really is. This is the "antichrist" as he's called 1 John 2:18. In 2 Thessalonians 2, he's called the man of sin and the son of perdition and also the lawless one. In Daniel 7:8,

he's called the little horn. In Daniel 9:26, he's referred to as "the prince who is to come". In Daniel 11:36, he's called the "willful king". And in Revelation 6:2 he's the one riding on the white horse. But here in Revelation chapter 13 he's called the Beast.

And that term suits him as well as any, because that's in essence what he is! He's a very dangerous and deceptive and extremely cruel beast. And of course that term not only speaks to what he will be; it also describes the kingdom that he will be in charge of during these last days.

Now, we also know from our studies elsewhere that these ten diadems mentioned here represent ten different kings, or leaders of nations, which will make up the revived Roman Empire, which will come on the scene and rise to dominance during the final days of the tribulation period. And this is his kingdom. This is the antichrist's kingdom.

Now, the seven heads represent the culmination of the seven world empires that have ruled the known world throughout world history. And of course we looked at those empires when studied the book of Daniel.

They were Egypt, the first great empire which oppressed Israel way back in the beginning of the Old Testament, and the kingdom that God first rescued the Israelites from. And then there was Assyria, who conquered the Northern kingdom of Israel. And then because the southern kingdom didn't learn anything from the destruction of the northern kingdom, they too were taken captive by the Babylonians. And the people in the southern kingdom of Judah were taken away to Babylon and Jerusalem and the first temple were destroyed.

And then the Medo-Persians came along, and after them, then the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and after he died, then the kingdom was

divided three ways and that's when Antiochus Epiphanies, a forerunner of the antichrist severely persecuted the Jewish people.

And then of course the Romans came to power next and were in power during the time of Jesus. And then here we have the revived Roman Empire, which is still yet future. And of course, then the final empire will be that of Christ when He returns at the very end of the tribulation period.

John also writes in verse 1 that there are "blasphemous names on the Beast's heads." And that simply means that this kingdom, which is lead by the antichrist, has but one unified purpose—and that is to destroy the work of God, and to eliminate any and all worship of the true Christ.

And then John describes this beast as having the likeness or the appearance of a leopard, and a bear, and a lion. And again when we studied Daniel's prophecy, he used these same images to describe the antichrist. Anybody remember what they represented?

The leopard was a picture of Greece, because of it's quickness to take over the world under Alexander the Great. And then the bear represented Medo-Persia as a symbol of strength and power, and then of course Babylon was represented by the lion because of their fierceness.

And so here we're being told that the Antichrist's kingdom, the revived Roman Empire, will combine all of those powerful characteristics. And that power of course will come from none other than Satan.

Now, in verse 2, we're told by John that it is Satan or the Dragon who will give the Antichrist "his power and great authority".

And then in verse 3, that satanic power is demonstrated.

One of the beast's heads appears at least, to have a mortal wound, but what appears to also be a miracle, his mortal wound is healed, and he's

resurrected and the whole world marvels at this miracle as they rally around and follow this beast.

Now, some folks think it's not really a mortal wound; that maybe it's a fake wound and death, but the wording in the Greek language indicates differently. The language that's used indicates that it is no doubt a mortal wound—and more than likely it's an assassination. And with the entire world looking on, the antichrist is brought back to life. And of course he's just imitating or trying to imitate what Christ did when God raised Him from the dead.

Now, obviously, all this has to be allowed by God. He has to have God's permission and this level of power no doubt will have to be delegated to Satan by God. Just like God delegated power to Pharaoh's magicians, when they were able to imitate many of the miracles that were performed by Moses.

And of course the result will be same. Those who are following the antichrist and those who have defied God will just be led farther and farther into the devil's deception as he imitates Christ.

Now, when people think about the name antichrist, they think it means "against Christ". And that's true. Anti does mean against. But it also means "in place of." In other words, the Antichrist is not just fighting against Christ; he wants to replace Him. He wants to take his place. And that's what he's always wanted. That's why he was booted out of heaven in the first place. And though in the very end, we know he'll be unsuccessful, still during these last days, he'll continue in his efforts to try and replace Christ. And here, he's trying to do it, by imitating Christ's resurrection.

And the sad truth is, it will have the effect on the world that Satan's looking for. Verse 3 says, **“The whole earth marveled and followed the beast.”**

And then Verse 4 says they worshipped the Antichrist, which means in essence they were worshipping Satan.

But this won't last forever. The Bible tells us in verse 5 that the Antichrist will be given **“authority for forty-two months”**. That's equal, of course, to three and a half years.

Now, during the first 3-1/2 years, the antichrist is going to bring peace to the world. Remember back in chapter 6 of Revelation, John saw the antichrist come riding in on a white horse? Well, again this was an attempt on Satan's part to try and imitate Christ. And he rides in on this white horse like the Savior of the world and he brings peace to the land of Israel, and he signs a peace treaty with Israel and the temple is rebuilt for the Jewish people, and they return to their sacrifices and their worship in the temple; and many of the Jews as well as others in the world are going to believe that the true Messiah has finally arrived!

But like we learned in Daniel, the Antichrist, after three and one half years, he's going to break that peace treaty with Israel, and he's going to try and wipe Israel and the Jewish people off the face of the earth. And in the process many will be slaughtered.

And then verse 6 says he will **“utter blasphemies against God.”** But of course the ultimate blasphemy will be when he enters this newly constructed temple and sets himself up and claims to be God. And this is what Jesus Himself describes as the **“abomination of desolation” in Matthew 24:15.**

And then if that's not bad enough, in verse 7, it says that God's going to allow him also to make war on the saints and to conquer them. In Daniel chapter 7 and verse 23, it says that the **whole world will be trampled down and broken to pieces.**

The antichrist and Satan are going to be allowed to do what many others have tried to do in the past but couldn't. They're going to be allowed to take over and conquer the entire world.

And this again is an attempt on Satan's part to imitate Christ. And in all this he's trying to imitate the millennium, that one thousand year period when after Christ comes back He rules the entire earth for a thousand years and this of course will happen just after the tribulation period is over.

And so there's going to be a bloodbath in the end like this world has never seen. John writes that the Antichrist will be allowed to gain power **“over every tribe and people and language and nation.”**

Even the Holocaust is going to pale in comparison to what happens during this last 3-1/2 years.

And so it's going to appear as if the Antichrist is going to win. When he achieves what no one else has ever achieved before in all of history and is given the ability by God to take over the entire world, it's going to look like he's won. And what's so bad, is the world for the most part is going to be happy about it.

Verse 8 says, He's going to be praised and worshiped by **“all who dwell on earth”**. But then John adds something very important. He says, these people who are worshipping the antichrist and Satan; these are people whose names are not written in the book of life.

In other words, these are unbelievers. These are people whose destiny has already been determined and when they die, they're going to get what

they want. They going to get to to worship Satan for all of eternity right along beside him as their tormented forever in hell.

Now, those who have become followers of Christ during this time, like I've told you before, they're more than likely to die a martyr's death for their refusal to worship this beast, but their reward will be worth it. Their reward, just like ours, will be eternity in heaven.

Now, if all this is not bad enough already, in verse 11 a second beast appears on the scene. And this one John tells us has **“two horns like a lamb”** but he speaks **“like a dragon.”** And over in Revelation 19:20, he's called the “false prophet”. And like all false prophets, when he first comes on the scene, he appears to be innocent and harmless like a lamb, but of course he's not innocent or harmless, he's a deceiver just like his father Satan.

In fact, this false prophet is actually Satan's imitation of the Holy Spirit. In other words, he's the anti-Spirit if you will. And just as the Holy Spirit exalts the glory of Christ, this false prophet will exalt the glory of the Antichrist. And his job is to create a global religion to unify the world to worship the Antichrist.

And how will he do it?

Well, look at verses 13 & 14. John says, He will do it by performing **“great signs and wonders”**. John says he makes fire come down from heaven to the earth in front of the people. And then he has a statue erected of the Antichrist for the people to worship.

And then in verse 15, God grants him the power to give breath to this statue of the antichrist. And then the statue speaks, and whatever the statue says, it causes the death of everyone who refuses to worship this image of the beast.

And so this reign of terror by Satan includes a global government; it includes a global false religion, and then lastly it's going to become a global economy which will also be controlled by Satan.

Look at verse 16.

16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

And so again, to try and force all people to worship him, the antichrist is going to make a law that says, “only those who take this unique mark on their right hand or their forehead will be allowed to buy or sell their goods.” In other words, if you want to work and eat, you're going to have to agree to join in with the rest of the world and worship the antichrist.

And once again, this is Satan imitating what God did back in Revelation 7 in verses 3 & 4, when God marked the foreheads of His 144,000 evangelists.

And then verse 18 says.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

We're told here that this mark is a number that represents his name; and then John writes, “**His number is 666.**”

Now through the years, people have tried everything imaginable to determine the identity of the Antichrist by this number. And they have come up with a long list of candidates, including the Emperor Nero, Mussolini, and Stalin. And of course Hitler was a popular choice because his goal, like that of the Antichrist, was to exterminate the Jewish people.

But of course, none of those men were the Beast. The antichrist, whoever he is or will be, has yet to appear, at least publicly.

And really if the Lord wanted us to know who he is, He would have told us. And to those of us who are genuine born again believers, it shouldn't matter who he is, because we're not going to be affected by him.

If you're a believer when the Rapture occurs, then you won't have anything to worry about, because you'll be in heaven when the antichrist comes to power. And so we don't need to waste a lot of energy on things we can't change, when there's plenty of other things we can put our energy toward that might just prevent somebody else from going through this terrible time. Amen?

Let's pray.