

Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon

Today's Message: The Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet; Revelation 13:1-18

If you asked me a couple years ago if I would want to preach on Revelation 13 I would say, no way, not now, not ever. I think it is timely.

Remember there is a great blessing promised from reading Revelation. We learned that in Revelation 1:3. Even in Chapter 13. One of the first questions that arises from reading chapter 13 is, what in the world am I to make of all this. But if you stay apprised of the current world events you begin to see the stage being set for the events of chapter 13.

There is so much going on, so much being proposed that we could not fathom, and its beyond our imagination. There is no chance, we would have thought, that a famous beer brand would put the image of a transvestite on the can to promote their beer. I would have told you two months ago that there is not a chance that that would ever happen. But there it is. What in the world? No way!

The political scene in Israel is unimaginable. People are nuts. In our own country. If I look east to Washington D.C., is simply insane. The words being used, and the "truths" being proclaimed are just otherworldly. There is no foundation. No logic. It doesn't fit with a biblical worldview. We are looking at economic shifts all over the planet. Nothing is certain. But there is one thing certain— my faith tells me that God is right, He's going to stay right, and He's the only unchangeable.

So, where do we start?

. First, I want to lay out several scriptures that serve as backdrop and somewhat format our approach to Revelation 13.

I. Scripture Serves as our backdrop to help us format our thinking concerning the Beast

A. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2:1-2)
 - a) What must take place first
 - (1) The rebellion, then,
 - (2) The man of lawlessness is revealed
 - (a) He will oppose God through blasphemies of all kinds
 - (i) He is one and the same Beast of Rev. 13
2. Concerning the man of lawlessness
 - a) The man of lawlessness cannot come on the scene until...

- (1) ...the “one who holds him back is taken out of the way” (2:7)
 - b) The man of lawlessness will be overthrown at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - c) Until the Lord Jesus comes the man of lawlessness will...
 - (1) Work in accordance with Satan’s power
 - (a) Working all kinds of counterfeit miracles and signs and wonders.
 - (b) Will deceive many people, if not most people.
 - 3. Concerning God and His sovereignty in those days
 - a) Because people refused to love the truth
 - (1) God sent a strong delusion so that they would believe *the lie*.
- B. 1 John 2:18-22
- 1. John warns of the coming Antichrist
 - 2. John tells us that many *antichrists* have already come and are here now!
 - a) Who are the current *antichrists*?
 - (1) 2:22, “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.”
- C. Habakkuk 2:2-3
- 1. Habakkuk prophesies that the Revelation will come to pass at the appointed time.
 - a) It will not fail
 - b) It may linger
 - c) But it will come to pass
 - d) And when it comes it will not delay
- D. Luke 4:1-13
- 1. Jesus was tempted. But we learn a valuable lesson about Satan’s authority
 - a) 4:5-7: “The devil led Him up to a high place and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to Him, ‘I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So, if you worship me, it will be all yours.’”
 - (1) Satan has been given earthly authority
 - (2) Satan can give his authority to whoever he chooses
 - (a) Antichrist, the Beast in Rev. 13
 - (3) Satan is starving to be worshiped more than anything.

E. Hebrews 12:2

1. Jesus did for us what the devil would not do for us!
2. Jesus emptied Himself, humbled Himself unto death on the cross.
 - a) For the joy... for us!

II. The Problem with the Devil

- A. The Devil seeks glory;
- B. He seeks worship;
- C. He seeks to be like God
- D. He seeks to overthrow God
- E. He seeks his own interests and ends

III. Revelation 13:1-10 The Dragon Ordains the Beast

- A. (13:1) Who is standing on the seashore?
 1. The dragon gives the beast his authority.
 - a) That's the main point.
 2. When will this happen? What does all this mean?
 - a) We will know when it is time.
 3. What can we know about the beast?
 - a) Read Daniel 7:1-6 concerning the beast coming out of the sea.
 - b) Compare Daniel 7:4-6 with Rev. 13:2
 - (1) John reverses the order
 - (a) Daniel: lion, bear, leopard
 - (i) He's looking forward into history: Babylon, Greece, and Rome.
 - (b) John: leopard, bear, lion
 - (i) He's looking back on history
- B. (13:1-4) Description of the beast
 1. (13:1-2) 10 horns, 7 heads, 10 crowns on his horns
 - a) The beast rules the world with authorities under him. The 10 horns, 7 heads and 10 crowns encompass the beast's history of ruling the world.
 - (1) 10 horns: ten strong nations, the kings that rule under the beast
 - (a) 10 crowns; indicates their authority
 - (2) The seven heads: As we study Revelation 17, we will learn that these 7 heads represent seven successive world empires:
 - (a) "Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist's final world kingdom." (MacArthur)

2. (13:3) The beast had a fatal wound on one of its heads but was healed
 - a) One of the heads will look as if it died
 - (1) But there will be a resurrection of some kind.
 - b) But the fatal wound was healed
 - c) The world saw this “miracle” and in astonishment followed the beast
 3. (13:4) The dragon and beast are worshiped
 - a) Dragon is worshiped because it gave authority to the beast
 - b) The beast is worshiped because he is amazing and powerful!
 - (1) There was safety. No war. Perhaps this is the peace treaty.
- C. (13:5–8) The pride of the beast revealed
1. The Beast in power
 - a) The beast was ‘given a mouth’ to utter proud words and blasphemy
 - b) The beast was given power to exercise authority for 42 months
 - (1) This is referring to the second half of the tribulation.
 2. The beast of blasphemies
 - a) Against God: His Name and His dwelling and...
 - (1) Those who live in heaven (the raptured church and angels)
 3. The beast of war
 - a) To dominate and defeat the living tribulation saints (mostly Jewish).
 - b) To dominate every tribe, people, language and nation.
 4. The beast of true but deadly worship
 - a) Everyone whose name was not written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world will join in the false worship of the beast.
 - (1) Those who were deluded as mentioned in **2 Thess. 2:11**.
- D. (13:9-10) A call to the tribulation saints
1. Tribulation saints. Notice the absence of the phrase, “what the Spirit says to the churches” as we read in Revelation 2-3, in the letters to the churches.
 - a) The church is not here in Revelation 13
 2. But these tribulation saints are to be faithful and endure faithfully.
 - a) Saints, if to captivity, go into captivity. Don't resist.
 - b) Saints, do not take up weapons to defend yourself, or you will die.
 - c) This calls for patience, perseverance and endurance of the saints.
 - (1) Because God has ordained captivity and persecution—it will happen!
 - (a) We are to “trust and obey”!

IV. (13:11-18) The Coming of the second beast and his authority and purpose

- A. (13:11) The second beast (see also 16:13; 19:20; 20:10)

1. Up out of the earth.
 2. Two horns: the number 2 in Scripture suggests that the second beast will be a witness for the first beast.
 - a) He is a great religious leader, leading the nations to worship the 1st beast.
 - b) "But spoke like a dragon". He has great authority.
 3. An unholy trinity has arisen
 - a) The Dragon (holds the power and delegates authority)
 - b) The Beast (Antichrist: who is possessed by the Dragon and spews the heart and words of the Dragon.
 - c) The Second Beast (False Prophet) who works in the power of the Dragon and the Beast.
- B. (13:12-17) The work and purpose of the Second Beast (The False Prophet): Idolatry
1. Forces the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast (Antichrist)
 - a) Remember the wound that appeared fatal. It is healed and people are amazed. The False prophet capitalizes on this.
 2. Brings down fire from heaven (indicates destruction)
 - a) What can anyone gain from following the beast?
 3. Sets up the idol of idols
 - a) He set up an image of the beast
 - b) He was given power to actually give breath to the image
 - c) Demands worship **or else: be killed.**
 4. He requires a mark on the foreheads of everyone who worships the beast.
 - a) No one can buy or sell without the mark
 - b) This mark is also counterfeit. See Rev. 7:1-4
- C. (13:18) The Number of the Beast
1. What we know:
 - a) We don't know much.
 - b) But we do know that it is man's number
 - (1) 666
 - c) Speculation is only speculation
 - d) The Lord will bring it to light when it is time.