

Revelation 13:1-10

"The True Colors Of The Antichrist"

Ch's 12-13, (stacked w/signs & symbols) bring into focus several of the primary players of the Great Tribulation. In Ch 12 John's vision (mostly) holds *heaven* in view. He saw great signs appear in heaven through which we were introduced to a woman whom we identified as Israel, the Messiah (J.C.), the dragon (aka Satan), Michael the Arc angel & the rest of the woman's offspring, those who keep the commandments of God & have the testimony of J.C.

In Ch 13 the scene shifts from heaven to the earth, John's continuing to track the movement of the dragon who has been (at this point) cut off suddenly & w/finality *from* heaven.

John tells us that war broke out in heaven: Michael & his angels fought w/the dragon; & the dragon & his angels fought, but they did not prevail nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil & Satan who deceives the whole world; he was cast...to the earth.

So heaven's rejoicing became earth's warning. "Rejoice O heavens, & you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth & the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having *great wrath*, because he knows that he has a short time."

And with that time (as we will see) he will seek to do as much damage & take as many people to hell w/him as he possibly can.

As we survey this section of scripture today I've taken the time to outline it as follows: Vs 1-2 "The Monster", Vs 3-4 "The Marvel", Vs 5-6 "The Malice", Vs 7-8 "The Murder" & Vs 9-10 "The Moral/Righteous Resolve". Notice Vs 1-2

Vs 1-2

The monster, or the beast, rising out of the sea whom the scriptures refer to in several different ways however the most common name that has stuck to him is "antichrist".

Now where it says there in Vs 13, "I" stood on the sand of the sea, your bible might say, "he" stood, or "the dragon" stood. That's because most of the earlier manuscripts render it "he", not "I". It really doesn't make a difference to the text, but it makes more sense to follow the flow out of Ch 12 having seen Satan cast to the earth that rather than John suddenly being on the seashore, that Satan, the dragon is the one whom John sees standing on the sand of the sea.

Because Satan is there, calling out his pawn, his puppet through which he will deceive the whole world (even as Vs 9 of Ch 12 identifies as his agenda).

Ok, several things begin to come into focus regarding this “beast”, this “monster” (if you will). #1 We read that he rises up out of the sea. Now again lets remember that this section of scripture is layered w/signs & symbols. Therefore we don’t anticipate a literal dragon standing on the beach of the Mediterranean sea calling a beast to rise up out of it.

2 Things about this “sea” mentioned here. #1 When we think of the sea we often picture romantic walks, or frolicking in the ocean on a family vacation. However you need to realize that, that is not *at all* the way the ancient Israelites envisioned the sea. Ancient Israelites were not ocean lovers at all, they were not a seafaring people. **As a matter of fact Jewish people of biblical times regarded the sea as a wild, untamed, terrifying place. There’s only 1 time that we know of in ancient Israel’s history that they had a navy & that was under the reign of Solomon. But even at that the sailors were provided by Hiram (a gentile) the king of Tyre (1 Kings 9:26-27).**

Ancient Israel was radically wary & suspicious of the sea. It was a figure of chaos & evil that sought to resist God (albeit unsuccessfully). For instance we read in the psalms, *“For God is my King from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.”* Psalm 74:12-13 & Again, *“O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them.”* Psalm 89:8-9 We read in Isaiah 57, *“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”* Isaiah 57:20

So as John sees this beast rising up out of the sea, understand that he’s communicating that this beast is coming forth from a place identified w/evil & chaos & resisting God.

#2 In identifying the “sea” as the place from which the beast comes forth we’re able to piece together the fact that he will ascend out of the Gentile nations. Ch 17 & Vs 15 tells us that the waters represent peoples, multitudes, nations, & tongues. However that doesn’t mean that the A.C. will be a Gentile, only that he will ascend from a Gentile nation (which we believe will be the revived Roman Empire [though it may be called something different, like the “EU” or “European Union” or something like that ☺]).

More than likely he will be a Jew because the odds of Israel considering Gentile to be their Messiah are slim to none. But he won’t arise out of Israel, rather somewhere else in the world.

Now when we begin to examine the characteristics of this “beast”, they seem strangely familiar don’t they? 7 heads, 10 horns, 10 crowns. These attributes resemble very closely those of the dragon whom we discovered in Ch 12:3 had 7 heads, 10 horns & 7 crowns. **So the details differ but the general characteristics appear the same. The point being that he will be like unto the dragon in his nature personally, but he’s not Satan specifically. Satanically energized to say the least, but not Satan.**

In many ways this will be Satan’s attempt at a counterfeit Trinity. We have Satan (who wants to be like the Most High, wants the recognition & worship deserved only by God), then we have the beast, or the A.C. who will be a false Messiah, & next week we’ll see a false prophet (who could typify the work of the Holy Spirit pointing people to worship the beast, or perhaps as a forerunner like J.B. pointing people to this false Messiah).

As for the 7 heads & 10 crowns, Ch 17 Vs 9 tells us that the 7 heads are 7 mountains or 7 hills which again points us to Rome (commonly referred to throughout history as the city of 7 hills) & the 10 horns are 10 kingdoms (horns representing strength in the scriptures) & the crowns point to the authority that the beast will wield over them.

Now if you’re wondering where I’m coming up w/all this stuff about horns, crowns, nations & all of that, this is where you have to do your homework. Write it down, Daniel Ch 2 & Daniel Ch 7. Daniel teaches us that the beast will arise out of this confederation of 10 nations, he will subdue 3 of them & the others will then submit to him willfully.

Something else I wanna say about this beast is that he’s commonly called the “antichrist”, but biblically that may not be the best name for him. Out of the 20+ names the bible ascribes to this man he’s only referred to as “antichrist” 5 times in 4 Vs all of which are found in 1st John. Yet for some reason the world has picked up on this & has “tattooed” this name on him in a way that stuck. It’s a foreboding, ominous name that Hollywood has capitalized on, & it’s accurate in it’s nature but can be misleading in its portrayal.

What I mean by that is that the word “antichrist” conjures up images & thoughts in our minds that make us think “opposite of Christ”. Jesus spoke only truth, he will speak only lies, Jesus was pure good, he will be pure evil, Jesus only helped people, he will only hurt people. **Jesus’ personality was beautiful, his personality will be ugly & repulsive. However that’s not the image that the bible paints of this man at all. Oh, those are his *true colors* as the bible makes clear, but more than “opposite of Christ” think more along the lines of “instead of Christ.”**

He will appear to be everything people are looking for in a great leader. Promises of peace & grandeur, economic growth & wealth for the common man, a charismatic orator w/powerfully persuasive words, what everyone is looking for. Not *opposite* of Christ (at 1st), *instead* of Christ. Paul said it like this, **“Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness,”¹**

He’s the “little horn” of Dan 7:8, the “king of fierce countenance” Dan 8:23, “The prince who is to come” Dan 9:26, the king that shall do according to his own will (Dan 11:36), the one who comes in his own name (John 5:43), he’s the son of perdition, the man of sin, the lawless one (2 Thess 2), the beast that rises out of the sea (Rev 13). The bible refers to him in several different ways, but for some reason “A.C.” is the title that stuck.

“On his heads a blasphemous name”, both is message (what’s on his mind) & his character is one of blasphemy against God.

Vs 2

Again John pulls images from Daniel Ch 7 to communicate both the identity & the nature of this beast. In Dan 7 Daniel has a vision whereby he sees 4 beasts, each representing successive world empires, the 4th being the final empire out of which the A.C. arises, becomes a global dictator, persecutes the Jews for 3 ½ yrs & then God destroys him and gives the kingdom to the saints.

The 1st beast was a lion, the 2nd was a bear, the third was a leopard & the 4th was more terrible & dreadful than the 3 that had gone before it, having iron teeth, devouring, breaking into pieces & trampling the residue under it’s feet. It was different than the beasts that went before it in that it had (listen) “10 horns”.

Now Daniel saw the lion, then the bear, then the leopard because he was looking forward into the future (these beasts represented Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire & the Grecian Empire), when John describes this beast he mentions the leopard, then the bear & then the lion (in reverse order) because he’s looking *back* into history.

But the idea here is that this beast will unite the most terrifying characteristics of all the previous empires. He’ll conquer w/the speed of Greece (under Alexander the Great); have the slow crushing power of the Medes & the Persians & the authority & global dominance of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Added to that will be Satan’s own power & throne & authority.

¹ The New King James Version. 1982 (2 Co 11:14-15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Which is to say as to where Jesus refused to receive the kingdoms of the world from Satan through bowing down (Matt 4:8-10), this man will take the offer & submit to Satan's dominion over his life.

More than likely he will be possessed by Satan himself & even as Jesus was God incarnate, this will be Satan's counterfeit Messiah, his attempt at being "Satan incarnate" & Satan will express his own desire & authority through this man.

Vs 3-4

Vs 1-2, "The Monster", Vs 3-4, "The Marvel". A counterfeit Christ even in death & resurrection, imagine that...

You get the picture don't you? You've got this world dominating leader, he's fierce, he's mighty, ruling w/the unchallenged authority (concerning the powers of this world) of Satan himself, he's deceived the world into thinking he's the world's solution & they've bought the lie; hook, line & sinker.

Now we don't know how he's wounded, be it some form of judgment from God, or perhaps an assassination attempt on his life but at some point he's wounded & it's not a superficial wound. He was "mortally wounded" or more literally he received a "death blow".

Now whether or not he actually dies there's a bit of ambiguity; but what we can say w/certainty is it was a fatal kind of wound. Imagine for a moment seeing JFK, 1963, the bullet suddenly penetrates his skull & in a flash he's gone. How that devastated the country, but then imagine for a moment if for all intents & purposes it was an impossible thing to survive, but there he is alive & serving as the President of the U.S. of A. what kind of frenzy that would've whipped this country into... ("USA, USA", & all of that).

This guy will receive a blow so serious that it's recognized as fatal, yet he will revive (or dare I say 'resurrect', that's how the people will honor it) & the world will rally behind this man like never before.

Now whether or not they knowingly worship Satan that's up for debate, but even as Jesus said, "I & My Father are one" even so to worship this man, to submit to his authority is tantamount to worshiping Satan himself & submitting to the dragon. Satan will receive what he's always desired, the worship of all the world (that is, those who've not come to believe in J.C.).

"Saying, 'who is like the beast? Who is able to make war w/him?'"

Remember that there's been an embarrassment or 2 along the way for him. Those 2 witnesses who were unleashing the judgment of God upon all who sought to thwart the message of God. Then he killed them but 3 ½ days later they rose from the dead & ascended into heaven.

That was a bit of a set back, but now he's been (for all intents & purposes) killed & he's "resurrected" as well. They've got nothing on him (you see?), he's killed them, he's risen from the dead, who is like the beast, who is able to make war w/him?

Interesting that from man's perspective he'll be a god, from God's perspective he's as a wild beast, untamed & energized by Satan himself. What did Jesus say, "*For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*"²

But he will really seek to capitalize on this "resurrection" of sorts; it's mentioned 2 more times in this Ch in connection w/the people's worship of him (Vs 12 & 14).

Vs 5-6

From the "Marvel" to the "Malice", once he's recovered from this "deadly wound" he begins to blaspheme God; all that He is, where He dwells & all who dwell w/Him in heaven. Perhaps a better title for this man than A.C. would be "blasphemer". As much as anything once he convinces the world of his deity he begins to speak openly against God & all that He stands for w/out restraint for 3 ½ yrs (42 months). He speaks "Great things" perhaps boasting on all that he's done in the world (standard political jargon to demonstrate that he alone has solved all the worlds problems) & he blasphemes the God of heaven. (Again I'd refer you to Daniel Ch 7 Vs 24-25)

Then to back up his authority in the eyes of those he's deceived he will begin to go on a murderous rampage against all the saints completely & totally unchecked. Notice.

Vs 7-8

The administration, the government will pass law persecuting & killing all who do not bow down & worship the beast. It will be granted to him to "make war" w/the saints. He will overcome them, not their faith, but their physical lives will be forfeited so that by all appearances he will seem to defeat both the cause of God & the people of God upon the earth.

Now, every now & then you'll run across one of those people who think that they don't wanna live for Christ now, but should all this stuff "actually happen" they'll choose Christ then. Listen, if you won't choose Christ now, when there is freedom to worship as you please & serve God openly...

² The New King James Version. 1982 (Lk 16:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

When God's people are being murdered by the 10's if not hundred's of thousands & this man is speaking against God & seeming to back it up by killing God's people, the odds of you choosing to submit to Christ then are slim to zero. That's why the bible says, Choose *this* day whom you will serve, *today* is the day of salvation, you don't have the guarantee of tomorrow, only right here, right now.

2 Things quickly about Vs 8. #1 There is a teaching that proposes that as it pertains to the Book of Life (the one book that you're name must be in for you to gain entrance to heaven) that everyone's name is written in it & when you reject Christ or die w/out Christ, then your name is blotted out. The bible doesn't support that theory at all. It *sounds good* but it's *not scriptural*. This Vs, (Vs 8) tells us that there are names not written in the Book of Life. They are those who will worship the beast, the blasphemer who opposes & exalts himself above all that is called God so that he sits in the temple *as* God seeking to show that he himself *is* God.

The point behind Vs 8 is to inform us of the fact that worshipping the beast (paying homage to this world dictator) & having your name in the Book of Life are mutually exclusive.

The 2nd thing I wanna point out is the fact that Jesus being slain for the sin of the world has been God's plan of redemption for mankind from the foundation of the world (or before mankind ever existed). Did you note that there? It's all apart of God's sovereign plan. The fall didn't take God by surprise so that He was frantic & sought for a solution & asked Jesus if maybe He'd be willing to help Him out. 1 Peter 1 teaches us that the sacrifice of J.C. for the purpose of our redemption was foreordained before the foundation of the world...

That's why in Isaiah 53 where he speaks of Christ being "wounded for our transgressions, & bruised for our iniquities," you find him speaking in the past tense some 700 yrs before Jesus was even born! Because as far as God was concerned it was already done, He's the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world...

But the world wouldn't receive J.C. therefore they'll be given over to the lie, the deception of the dragon & receive & worship the A.C....

Vs 9-10

"The Moral Resolve", we might call it "poetic justice". "If anyone has an ear, let him hear." It's a word of encouragement to those who seem to be on the losing side, those seeking to remain faithful to God.

Daniel Ch 7 tells us that though the saints will be given into his hands for 3 ½ yrs, afterward God will destroy the dominion of the beast forever & the people, the saints of the Most High will receive an everlasting kingdom whereby all dominions shall serve & obey the Lord.

So the Lord gives a word of encouragement here, “He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity.” The point is that the A.C. & those serving him will reap what they sow, don’t be deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that will he also reap.

Those leading the saints into captivity will be brought into captivity, those executing the saints will they themselves be executed, so fight the good fight, lift up your eyes, your redemption draws near.

You know the bible goes to a great extent to give us detailed information regarding the A.C. So we want to study, we want to be informed & aware, that we might watch & pray. Yet for all of that we’re not looking for the A.C. We’re to set our eyes upon & be looking for J.C. the One who has loved us & has given Himself for us.

The fact that there are “false christs” which will culminate ultimately in the A.C. only testifies to the reality of J.C. You only discover a counterfeit for something of which there is a genuine article. No such thing as a fake 8 dollar bill, because there’s no genuine article. Yet there are counterfeit diamonds, counterfeit rubies, emeralds, fake hardwood floors & all kinds of counterfeits for which there are genuine articles. So by the fact that there are so many who would claim to be Christ; that should only testify to you that Jesus really *is* the Christ.

Not only by claim, but through demonstration of His death & resurrection. Out of every person who has ever lived in human history, only 1 has lived, died, rose again of his own power from the dead & ascended bodily into heaven & that’s J.C. He is the way, the truth & the Life & no one comes to the Father except through Him.

Make sure that your name is in the book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world... How does that happen? *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*³ Amen? Amen.

³ The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 3:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Prayer Points:

God we're so thankful for the clarity, & the richness of Your word. You haven't left things to chance, or caused things to be ambiguous or uncertain. You speak clearly; may we have ears to hear you both individually & as a body. & For as much as You have encouraged us through exposing the lies & the agenda of our enemy, of Satan & of the A.C. Help us that our eyes remain upon You & that we be looking for the soon return of J.C. in whom we trust; Lord we love You, we love You, we love You & we praise You that You loved us 1st & made a way where there was no way...

That way is spelled out very clearly, very simply in the pages of scripture. That if you will turn from your sin & trust in the Lord J.C. who shed His blood for your sin, paid a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay, you will be saved. Saved from the penalty of your own ways, washed clean & given everlasting life. Don't put it off, choose this day whom you will serve...