

## Who Is The Beast Of Revelation? (#1)

Ezra 7:11-12

Revelation 19:19-20

Revelation 13:1-8

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The thoughts of many Christians have no doubt turned to wicked political systems in light of the recent election in the United States. Far too many Christians have for too long put their hope and confidence in a political party or a political leader to bring about national prosperity and reformation. However, there is no hope for a nation apart from faith and hope in Jesus Christ, our only Mediator between God and man. The nations of this world have by their constitutions and by their rulers usurped the exalted place that Christ alone should have as King of kings and Lord of lords. The nation that rejects and will not constitutionally and covenantally own Christ as King of kings, that rejects and will not constitutionally and covenantally own the Moral Law of God (as revealed in the Bible) to be the supreme law of the land, that rejects and will not constitutionally and covenantally own the true Christian religion of the Bible alone (as summarized in faithful Confessions of Faith and Covenants like the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Solemn League and Covenant), and that rejects and will not place into positions of authority only those who swear to uphold these truths, that nation will fall under the righteous judgment of Christ (as promised in Psalm 2:10-12).

Our focus in recent sermons has been centered upon identifying who the Beast and the False Prophet are in their opposition to Christ and His faithful witnesses. We have observed that the time periods given in the Book of Revelation in which the Beast and the False Prophet war against Christ and His faithful witnesses eliminate the possibility of these enemies being a single individual (whether Nero in the past, or whether a

future political or religious leader). For when the time periods in the Book of Revelation are interpreted using the biblical key given to us by the Holy Spirit (the Day-Year Principle), we have observed that these time periods are much too long for any single individual to fulfill these prophecies (a prophetic time, times, and half a time, a prophetic 42 months, and a prophetic 1,260 days=1,260 years). Thus, the Beast and the False Prophet must be specific political and religious institutions in order to war against Christ and His faithful witnesses for 1,260 years. We now move forward (by God's grace) to identify who these enemies are. We shall first cast the light of God's inspired Word upon the identity of the Beast of Revelation (and in future sermons upon the identity of the False Prophet of Revelation). Our main points for the sermon this Lord's Day are: (1) The General Identity of the Beast (Revelation 13:1-3); (2) The Characteristics of the Beast (Revelation 13:4-8).

## **I. The General Identity of the Beast (Revelation 13:1-3).**

A. As the Apostle John stood upon the sand of the sea, he saw in a vision a Beast arise out of the sea. This Beast of the sea is to be distinguished from the Beast of the earth (in Revelation 13:11, which as we shall see is the same as the False Prophet). Some of the details which further identify more specifically the Beast of the sea are given in Revelation 13:1b and Revelation 13:3 (which we shall look more closely at in the next sermon). But for the sermon today, our attention will be focused on the more general description of this Beast that is revealed in Revelation 13:1-3.

B. Here in Revelation 13, there is revealed in figurative language a monstrous Beast that arises from the sea (Revelation 13:1), that has seven heads and ten crowned horns (in Revelation 13:1), and that has the bestial features of a leopard, bear, and lion (in Revelation 13:2). I submit

that we find similar features of this Beast revealed in figurative language likewise in another prophetic portion of Scripture: Daniel 7. Turn with me to Daniel chapter 7. Again we shall use the interpretive key—Scripture interprets Scripture—to unlock the meaning of the Beast of Revelation.

1. In Daniel 7, God gives Daniel a vision of “four great beasts” which come up “from the sea” (Daniel 7:3). Just as the Beast of Revelation 13 comes from the sea, so the Beasts of Daniel likewise come from the sea (i.e. from the tumult and revolutions of the Gentile nations of the world).

2. These Beasts in Daniel 7 are identified as four distinct kings (i.e. kingdoms or empires) that shall arise from Daniel’s time forward, one kingdom succeeding the previous kingdom (Daniel 7:17,23). These same four kingdoms (or empires) are revealed in different figurative language earlier in Daniel 2:31ff as various parts of an image (a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs and feet of iron, though the feet and toes are mixed with clay). Likewise, the Lord through Daniel interprets these four parts of the statue to be four successive kingdoms (or empires) that would arise at their appointed times in history (beginning with Babylon, the reigning empire in Daniel’s time, Daniel 2:38-43).

3. Now consider the description used of these Beasts in Daniel 7. The first Beast was like a **lion** (Daniel 7:4)—this is the political kingdom of Babylon (which corresponds to the head of gold in Daniel 2:38). The second beast was like a **bear** (Daniel 7:5)—this is the political kingdom of Medo-Persia, which succeeded Babylon as the next kingdom or empire (which corresponds to the arms of silver in Daniel 2:39). The third beast was like a **leopard** (Daniel 7:6)—this is the political kingdom of Greece, which succeeded Medo-Persia as the next kingdom or empire (and corresponds to the belly and thighs of brass in Daniel 2:39). Note that all three animal descriptions of these kingdoms are used with regard to the Beast we find in Revelation 13:2. This would seem to indicate the

Beast of Revelation embodies all of the strength and power of these three ancient kingdoms or empires.

4. And when we come to Daniel's fourth Beast, it is not given the characteristic of any particular animal, because as was just noted, it embodies the strength of all the kingdoms that preceded it. Daniel's fourth kingdom or empire is said to be "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly" (Daniel 7:7). What kingdom or empire that succeeded the empire of Greece would embody the strength of all the previous empires? Rome, the Roman Empire (which corresponds to the legs and feet of iron, though the feet and toes are mixed with clay in Daniel 2:40-43). The extent of Rome's power and boundaries did in fact exceed that of the previous three empires.

5. Finally note that this fourth Beast of Daniel has ten horns (Daniel 7:7). This likewise parallels the Beast in Revelation 13:1, which also has ten horns. We'll have more to say in the next sermon about the seven heads (and the one head that was healed) along with the ten horns on this Beast of Revelation.

C. We can now say with confidence that the Beast of Revelation whom Christ will destroy has a direct connection with the Roman Empire, for the likeness of the Beast of Revelation with that of the Beasts of Daniel 7 (and particularly the connection with the fourth Beast that has the ten horns) cannot be dismissed. In fact, the revelation of the Beast given to the Apostle John is a continuation of the revelation of the fourth Beast given to the Prophet Daniel. Thus, the Beast of Revelation 13 is not specifically a religious entity, but is rather a political and civil entity. Just as all four of the Beasts (i.e. kingdoms) in Daniel's prophecy emphasized the civil aspects of these kingdoms, so likewise, the Beast of Revelation emphasizes the civil/political nature of some form of the Roman Empire that is prophesied to war against Christ and His faithful witnesses for 42 prophetic months (or 1,260 years). A particular feature of one of the

heads of this Beast (that is healed from a deadly wound) and the ten horns upon this Beast (which wear crowns) actually give us important information as to a more particular identity of this Beast and its relationship to the Roman Empire, which we shall consider in upcoming sermons.

## II. The Characteristics of the Beast (Revelation 13:4-8).

A. First, the Beast's power, throne, and authority come from Satan (Revelation 13:2,7b).

1. The Beast's "power" (i.e. his outward coercive power to enforce his wicked will, his "seat" (i.e. the temporal glory of his throne), and his "great authority" (i.e. his authority to rule over "all kindreds, and tongues, and nations") was immediately granted to him by the dragon, which is the figurative name used for Satan (Revelation 12:9; Revelation 20:2). Now that is not to say that God is not the supreme Governor and King of the nations, directing and disposing all nations as it pleases Him (**Proverbs 21:1**; Psalm 22:28 [the LORD is Governor among the nations]; Psalm 47:7-8 [God is the King of all the earth]; **Jeremiah 10:6-7**; **Daniel 4:35,37**). When Satan grants power to kings and kingdoms to rule on his behalf, it is ultimately power that comes from God, which power they use to their own destruction (Isaiah 10:5-7,12). What is clearly communicated about this civil/political Beast which bears a relationship to the Roman Empire (in Revelation 13) is that it rules not on behalf of Christ, but rather on behalf of Satan.

2. Dear ones, I submit to you that Satan likewise grants power, throne, and authority to all nations to rule who refuse to kiss the Son of God constitutionally as the King of kings and Lord of lords, who refuse to rule by Christ's moral laws (as found in the Old and New Testaments), who refuse to establish His one true religion as the only religion of a nation (while suppressing all false religion), and who refuse

to require all rulers (at whatever level of government) to swear the same.

a. It matters not whether that nation is called a democracy, republic, kingdom, or is ruled by the will of the people, by the will of a few, or by the will of dictator. If that nation does not constitutionally and covenantally kiss and submit to Christ (as King of kings and Lord of lords), that nation is governed on behalf of Satan, and Christ (the Prince of the kings of the earth) will crush all nations who refuse to officially kiss Him and establish His laws and His pure religion (Psalm 2:10-12).

b. All such nations (among which I must sadly include the United States) that legally tolerate idolatry, false religion, blasphemy, heresy, covenant-breaking, Sabbath-breaking, murder of the unborn, and immorality of every kind (even same sex “marriages”) are not neutral to these many abominations, but are legally promoting them by their express toleration. And in so doing, all such rulers and nations demonstrate that they are not morally ruling on behalf of Christ (as the ministers of God for good), but are morally ruling on behalf of the dragon, Satan, from whom they have temporarily received a power, a throne, and an authority to war against Christ and His faithful witnesses.

c. Thus, dear ones, we as Christians cannot swear to uphold the constitution of a nation (or give our allegiance to a nation) whose power to rule is satanic, but rather we must pray, teach, write, publish, and promote the gospel of Jesus Christ which alone can change the wicked hearts of men to turn in faith and repentance to Jesus Christ, and whose changed hearts will then promote biblical reformation in God’s institutions of family, church, and state in accordance with biblical revelation.

B. The second characteristic of the Beast is that he is worshipped (Revelation 13:4,8).

1. It is stated very clearly that those upon the earth will worship the dragon (Satan) and the Beast (the civil/political system that flows from the ancient Roman Empire). But does this worship mean that the nations will literally worship Satan and the Beast as God, or will literally pray to Satan and the Beast as God? I submit that it is not an explicit worship of Satan and the Beast that is in view here in Revelation 13:4,8, but is rather an implicit worship.

a. When the Apostle John “worshipped” the angel that revealed to him this vision (Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8), he did not believe that the angel was Jehovah God, but rather John gave honor and esteem to the angel as if the angel was responsible for the revelation given to him (he robbed God of His glory). Whenever any created being is given credit, glory, or honor that belongs to God, that created being is worshipped (at that point the honor due to God is usurped by the creature). People worship this civil/political Beast by giving him honor and glory that belongs to Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords. This implicit worship of the Beast is also noted in the questions found in Revelation 13:4: “Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Revelation 13:4). Such speech is blasphemous and is intended to bestow upon the Beast the attributes of God Himself (Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 33:26).

b. Likewise, “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” worship the Beast when they give to the Beast an absolute obedience (that is due alone to the one true living God). You see, dear ones, there is no mere human being or no human institution that can lawfully and morally demand of us absolute obedience. Only God and His Moral Law is lord of the conscience. The Christians in Berea were commended by the Holy Spirit because they compared what even the Apostle Paul taught them with the Scriptures of the Old Testament to see whether it was true or not (Acts 17:11).

2. As faithful as we may judge the Westminster Confession of Faith to be, it is subordinate to God's Word. Note what the Confession itself states (31:4):

All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both.

3. Whether absolute obedience is given to a religious leader (like the pope, a minister, or Mohammed), or to a political leader (like Caesar, Hitler, a president, prime minister, or a king), or to a human document (like the Constitution or a Confession of Faith), or to a society, or even to a parent, or to a husband, absolute obedience to any mere creature or to any human institution, document, or society is idolatry and is worship of the creature rather than the worship of the one true living God. The following was such an act of idolatry given to Hitler in the Third Reich:

I swear by God this sacred oath that to the Leader of the German empire and people, Adolf Hitler, supreme commander of the armed forces, I shall render unconditional obedience and that as a brave soldier I shall at all times be prepared to give my life for this oath (The Wehrmacht Oath of Loyalty to Adolf Hitler, August 2, 1934).

4. I submit that in this sense, the civil/political Beast that issues forth from the Roman Empire is likewise worshipped as he is given absolute obedience and the honor and glory that belong to Jesus Christ alone.

C. The third characteristic of the Beast is that he utters blasphemies (Revelation 13:5-6).

1. These blasphemies of the Beast are the reason for the worship given to him. The blasphemies of the Beast include his pretension to act as sovereign Lord over the consciences of people by His ungodly laws and demands (e.g. the establishment of religious polytheism and every form of false religion and false gods, the protection



and promotion of murder of unborn children, the redefinition of Divine institutions like marriage etc.). In all such ways, the Beast utters blasphemies against the one true living God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and makes himself like unto the one true living God.

2. Another form which the blasphemies of the Beast take is by way of the civil government intruding itself into the doctrine and government of Christ's Church (Erastianism). When a civil ruler is declared to be the supreme head or supreme governor of the Church on earth, this is a clear example of blasphemy (whether it be the monarch of England, or the pope); for Christ alone is head of the Church (in heaven and on earth, Colossians 1:18).

3. This same blasphemy of the Beast is also manifested in the civil government that declares it has the power to form the Church of Jesus Christ into a civil corporation and to require in that civil corporation officers (or trustees) that are not appointed by Jesus Christ, but rather are officers solely created by the civil government in order that the offerings given to the Church might be tax deductible. I submit to you that all such compliance by churches is likewise an unlawful act of obeisance and subjection to the usurpation of the crown rights of Jesus Christ over His Church, which He built and purchased by His own blood.

4. The high blasphemies of the Beast are likewise manifested in requiring ministers to avoid preaching on biblical doctrines and practices that the Beast hates (as was required in the Indulgences in Scotland under Charles II and James II) or to require preaching on matters of toleration of false religion or immoral behavior, all of which Christ hates (Revelation 2:6; Revelation 3:15).

D. The fourth characteristic of the Beast is that he makes war against the saints (Revelation 13:7a).

1. Thus, the consequence of not worshipping the Beast by yielding to him absolute obedience is war against Christ and persecution

of Christ's faithful witnesses (whether fines, confiscation, imprisonment, or death).

2. This civil/political Beast works very closely with the religious False Prophet in the Book of Revelation (as we shall see), and this is likewise evidenced in the following summary of persecution by the Beast given by Alexander M'Leod (*Lectures Upon the Principle Prophecies of the Revelation*, p.421):

A million of the Waldenses perished in France: nine hundred thousand of the orthodox suffered in thirty years after the institution of the Jesuits: the duke of Alva boasted of having put thirty-six thousand to death in the Netherlands by the hands of the common executioner. In thirty years the inquisition destroyed one hundred and fifty thousand. In France, in fifty years, from 1530-1580, a million of protestants lost their lives; Charles the IXth, glorying in his letters to the Pope that he had massacred seventy thousand in a few days. At the revocation of the edict of Nantz, by Louis XIVth, it is computed that one hundred thousand were murdered, and one million banished from their country. Before the states of Holland established their independence, there were murdered in the reign of Charles V, about fifty thousand; in the succeeding fifteen years about one hundred thousand, and more than a half million fled their country. How many more must have fallen in the war for religion and liberty which they waged with some intermissions, almost for eighty years. Besides those who were put to death in the early persecutions of Scotland, Charles II and James II involved the protestant throne of England in the blood of the martyrs, and attempted to restore the nation to the communion of the Roman Catholics.

3. The length of time in which this civil/political Beast (who is the moral and historical descendant of the Roman Empire) makes war against Christ and His faithful witnesses is 42 prophetic months (i.e. 1,260 prophetic days, which using the Day-Year Principle is 1,260 years). If we can find when the 1,260 year period of war against Christ and against His faithful witnesses began, we can give some account as to when this period will end (which we will discuss in a future sermon).

Dear ones, let us pray that more and more Christians would be awakened to the impotency and idolatry that prevails in churches and pulpits who look to the political systems and to the civil governments of this world for deliverance from corruption, deliverance from tyranny, deliverance from poverty, and who look to the political systems and to the civil

governments of this world for reformation of morality and true religion. Our only hope, dear ones, is in Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords and who will destroy all His and our enemies, and particularly the Beast and the False Prophet.

Dear ones, in whom is your confidence and hope to change your heart to flee that temptation to sin, to change the heart of a family member, to provide work and financial needs, to remove the loneliness or discouragement that weighs so heavily upon you, to heal that bodily affliction? Dear ones, if your confidence and hope is in yourself, in a political/religious leader, or in any creature, you are practicing idolatry. You are giving the creature that place of honor and glory that belongs alone to Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Turn to Him in faith and repentance even now, dear ones. For there is none like unto the Lord our God.

“Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee” (Jeremiah 10:6-7).

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