

# The First Beast Of Revelation 13 and Daniel 7, Part 1 [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com)

*Book of Revelation*

By W. J. Mencarow

**Bible Text:** Revelation 13; Daniel 7  
**Preached on:** Sunday, April 6, 2008

**Reformation Church**  
317 S. Sidney Baker, PMB 304  
Kerrville, TX 78028

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/reformation](http://www.sermonaudio.com/reformation)

Revelation, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter. We'll begin in verse 1.

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 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? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. 11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be

killed. 16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Thus far we have read God's word through chapter 13 of Revelation. Now the book of Revelation is a history book. It is the story of the church of Jesus Christ from the first century through the end of time and throughout eternity. This idea which is modern today that the book of Revelation is pretty much only about the end times is actually a fairly recent invention. It was invented in the early, late 1600s, 1690 it was first published by a Jesuit and the idea was to put everything in the book of Revelation toward the future, therefore the hope and the Roman papacy cannot possibly be the antichrist because it all appears at the end of time. So that's...and unfortunately the church today in large part has bought into that. But historically the Protestant church has never taught that. The Reformers, the proto-Reformers, post-Reformers, historically up until quite recently has taught that the book of Revelation is a history book from the first century through the end of time.

Now if you understand the book of Revelation, you're going to understand the past, the present and the future. You'll be able to interpret current events in the context of the Lord's plan for the world. You see, the purpose of history which we don't learn in school, secular school, government school, the purpose of history is to glorify the Lord through his body, the church. That's the whole purpose of history. All events that have ever happened, all events that will ever happen are planned by the Lord for his glory and for the good of his church. The church is the centerpiece of history. We have to look at history through the eyes of the church. No event in history can be understood, completely understood, at least understood as it should be done, apart from recognizing the fact that the church is the centerpiece of history. All of history is moving toward the glorification of God and his body, the church.

Now in the previous chapter, in chapter 12, we saw the early church which was represented as a woman persecuted by Satan and it's pretty much universally agreed by Protestants that was the pagan Roman Empire represented as a great red dragon. This persecution ceased in 311 AD under the nominally Christian Emperor Constantine who came to the throne. Chapter 12 closes in that period. The establishment of Christianity is the de facto religion of the Roman Empire and this was one of the greatest and most far-reaching events in the history of the world. In his book "History Unveiling Prophecy," H. Grattan Guinness says, speaking of the centuries before Constantine came to the throne, "During the long period of a thousand years, the dark shadow of paganism had covered the city and Empire of Rome. Its temples were innumerable and adorned with the utmost magnificence. Its wealth, the accumulation of ages, was fabulously great. Its priesthood was established and endowed by government, the Roman Emperor himself occupying the position of the Supreme Pontiff of the hierarchy." And that's where we get the word "pontiff." It's from the Roman Emperor, that's what he called himself. "In the fourth

century, this monstrous system was brought to ruin. Working upwards from the lowest strata of society, the belief and the unity of the Godhead and the divinity of the Christian religion, a belief commended by the lives and sealed by the blood of the martyrs, had gradually reached the highest classes in the community and effectuated the conversion of the Roman Emperor. The suppression of paganism gradually followed and in less than a century its faint and minute vestiges were no longer visible. In this memorable event, apocalyptic prophecy was strikingly fulfilled, a fact clearly recognized and openly confessed by the leader Christian writers of the period."

Revelation 12:8, if you want to look at that, please. Let's go with 7,

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

The dragon is the ten horned wild beast power of the apocalypse, it says in verse 3 there in 12, whose identity with the fourth or ten horned wild beast of the prophecies of Daniel was recognized by the church in the second, third and fourth centuries. Of this beast, dreadful and terrible, Daniel 7:7, the third century Christian writer Hippolytus says, "Who are these but the Romans? The kingdom which is now established."

Now John says the dragon is great here and the greatest power in the world at that time was the pagan Roman Empire red with the blood of wars and red with the blood of the Christian martyrs. In fact, did you know a dragon was one of the prime symbols used by the Roman army, first seen near the close of the second century AD. According to the Roman historian Marcellinus, "In the third century the dragon symbol had become almost as notorious among Roman ensigns as the eagle itself. To commemorate the fall of paganism, the Emperor Constantine caused medals to be struck and those medals showed a dragon being thrown into the pit." In his epistle to Eusebius and other bishops concerning the re-edifying repairing of churches, Constantine said, "Liberty," now this is the Emperor, "Liberty now being restored and the dragon being removed from the administration of public affairs by the providence by the great God." And he had a great painting, huge painting, Constantine, in the front portico of his palace so everybody who came in, they saw that painting, and it showed Constantine on his throne with a cross above his head and below him was a great dragon stricken through with a dart and cast into the pit of destruction. Eusebius, the great church historian, says he did this to represent Satan in the form of the pagan Roman Empire defeated by the Christian Roman Emperor Constantine.

So that's a little bit of history. We've said many times the book of Revelation is largely symbolic. The great red dragon obviously is not a literal animal. It's a symbol. And the book also uses composite symbols. One symbol can represent more than one thing, more than one person or more than one entity. For example, the great red dragon in chapter 12 is both the pagan Roman Empire but it's also Satan because Satan is controlling the pagan Roman Empire, he's behind it. So that's very important to remember, symbols are often composites and that'll help us save us a lot of confusion.

Now the book of Revelation in chapter 13 deals with events in the Roman Empire after Constantine. Remember chapter 12 closed in his reign, chapter 13 is concerned with the rise of the papacy, its dominance in the world and its persecution of the true church. Chapters to come will tell us of its decline and fall and the final triumph of the church of Jesus Christ before the last day. Before the last day.

Now if you're familiar with the book of Daniel, you cannot help but be struck by the similarities between it and the book of Revelation; even though they were written almost 500 years apart, some passages are almost word-for-word. That should come as no surprise, both books were authored by the same person, the Holy Spirit. In fact, the two books are largely the same prophecy, even the symbolism is the same.

Let's look at Revelation 13:1 as an example,

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Now turn to Daniel, if you will, chapter 7. Now Daniel is describing his vision, his dream, beginning in verse 3 and in his dream,

3 ... four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

Now doesn't that remind you of what we just read in Revelation 13? Both Daniel and John seem to describe the same beast. Daniel's fourth beast and the fourth beast dreadful

and terrible, strong exceedingly with great iron teeth, it broke everything in its path, stomped it out, and it was different and it had ten horns, but Daniel's fourth beast and John's first beast in 13:1, saw a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns and ten crowns and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. It has ten horns. In Revelation 12:3, John saw a great red dragon having ten horns. In Revelation 17:3, John saw a scarlet colored or red colored beast having ten horns.

So here's a beast, sounds like the same beast. What is this beast? What is the significance of the ten horns? Well, we know that the Bible has to be its own interpreter. It's its own dictionary. It's its own thesaurus. Our Lord has not left us without a road map. There's no need for guessing. The Lord tells us plainly. In Daniel 7 in verse 15,

15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. [As I'm sure they did. I'm sure they would to anyone.] 16 I came near unto one of them that stood by [an angelic being], and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

So he didn't leave him without a road map, didn't leave him without any guide. Just as the Lord said in Daniel 8:16, "Gabriel, make this man," speaking of Daniel, "to understand the vision." So John too is given explanations for his principal visions. Remember the visions were given to John so he'd give them to us and the explanations are given to us. Do you remember the vision of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks in Revelation 1? The meaning was clearly explained to John and to us. Revelation 1:20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks," Jesus is saying, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches," which are the ministers, "and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches." Very plain. Very plain. That's the symbolism, this is the reality. Then we learn the names of the seven churches and the angels and the pastors of those churches so there's no mystery. There's no mystery of the woman seated on the beast in Revelation 17. The Lord tells us plainly who that is. In Revelation 17:7, "But the angel said to me, Why do you marvel? I'll tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her." And he proceeds to do so.

In fact, it would be good if you look at Revelation 17, we haven't gotten there yet, in 17:7, you might want to underline or highlight these words to remind you when you come to passages that are difficult to understand, that the Bible really gives us explanations in many cases for them. For example, you want to mark, say, the beginning of these, verse 8, "The beast that thou sawest was." Okay, clearly, you saw the beast, this is what it was. In verse 12, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are," again, an explanation. Verse 15, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are." And again, "And the woman which thou sawest is," in verse 18. The Lord is saying, "You saw this vision, here's what it means." Dr. Guinness says in his book "Romanism and the Reformation: These four sentences, verse 8, 12, 15 and 18, are the key to the book of Revelation. The beast, the ten horns," he says, "the waters, the woman, are all interpreted and their interpretation involves or carries in it the interpretation of the book of Revelation." So

again, it's Revelation 17:8, 12, 15 and 18. So as we move through the book in this sermon series, we'll see how all these tie together, so let's not be afraid of exploring these hidden and dark passages. The Lord has given us the light of Christ to shine before us and to be our guide.

Now back to these animals or beasts of Daniel and Revelation. What are these beasts? Who do they symbolize? Well, in Daniel 8:17, the angel explains to Daniel the four great beasts are four kingdoms. Okay, Daniel 8:17, the four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. No mystery there, they are four kingdoms. Plain as can be. The beast of Daniel, the beast of John are kingdoms, empires, nations.

Now in biblical prophecy, kingdoms are often represented as animals or beasts. The ten horned beast is the Roman power, but remember it's a combined symbol of both civil and ecclesiastical power, church power and state power. Beast can also represent spiritual kingdoms as we've already seen in our study of Revelation concerning the great red dragon both the pagan Roman Empire and the spiritual kingdom behind it, Satan. So an animal or a beast can be a symbol of a great earthly power and/or a symbol of the ultimate power that controls it, the power behind the throne, Satan controlling earthly power.

We saw in Revelation 12 that Satan was frustrated in his attempt to destroy the true church but God protected her. Chapter 12 covers approximately the first 400 years of the New Testament church and its persecution by the Roman Empire primarily. Now let's compare this great red dragon in chapter 12 of Revelation to the first beast of Revelation 13. Chapter 12, verse 3 says, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns." Now in Revelation 13, the beast that comes out of the sea also has seven heads and ten horns but this is a different beast than the one in Revelation 12.

How do we know that? There are at least five reasons to know that. One, it's not called a dragon. Second, remember John did not divide his letter into chapters and verses, men did that. So it's all one long letter as far as John's concerned and he's just finished telling us about the dragon. If the beast out of the sea was that dragon, he would say, "Well, there it is again." Third, the dragon came out of heaven in chapter 12, not out of the sea as this beast does in chapter 13. Actually the dragon was thrown out of heaven as we read in chapter 12, verse 9. Fourth, the beast has ten crowns, the dragon only has seven or had seven crowns. The fifth reason, in Revelation 13:2 it says the dragon gave him his power thus making a distinction between the dragon and the beast.

So it's quite clear the beast is not the dragon although it is a power under the dragon's control. It has seven heads, probably a double symbolism. It refers to the seven hills on which the city of Rome is built. Revelation 17:9, "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains." Pretty clear.

Since the head, this is another reason, since the head is the governing body of the governing power of the body, seven heads may be symbolic of the seven successive

governments of the Roman Empire. There were seven types of government of the Roman Empire, seven heads: monarchy, consulate, dictatorship, decemvirity, which is ruled by ten men, tribunate, military and emperorship through the history of the Roman Empire.

Now this beast out of the sea in chapter 13 has a lot in common with the dragon in chapter 12. It has seven heads as well, so in some way it too is the Roman Empire yet not in the same way as it was in chapter 12. Note that the first beast of Revelation 13 has seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns. The dragon had seven crowns. And unlike the great red dragon, this beast wears his crowns on his horns. He wears his crowns on his horns. Well, what are the horns of an animal for, antlers, horns? Fighting, right? Their power is in their horns. So horns signify power. In the Bible, horns are political power. We'll see this over and over again in Revelation. Kings or kingdoms as in Revelation 17:12 defines horns, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings."

The first beast of Revelation 13 has three more kingdoms than the one in Revelation 12. So it's not the great red dragon specifically but it has a lot in common with it. What could it be? Well, as I said, we have, what did I say? 88 commentators from the 600s to the 1800s and 58 of them saying it's one thing and 30 of them saying it's another, and there's other opinions as well. The 1599 Geneva Bible which was the Bible of the Puritans, the Bible that came over on the Mayflower, the Bible of this country for many years, the notes in that Bible agree that this is the first beast, that the first beast of Revelation 13 is the Roman Empire and that broad definition is accepted by most of the historic Protestant commentators, that it's the Roman Empire. But in what form? Thomas Newton in his book "Dissertations on the Prophecies," in 1817 wrote, "No doubt is to be made that this first beast was designed to represent the Roman Empire for thus both ancients and moderns, papists and Protestants are agreed. The only doubt and controversy is whether it was Rome pagan or papal." Which one? John saw this beast, he continues, "John saw this beast rising out of the sea but the Roman Empire was already risen and established long before John's time, therefore this must be the Roman Empire not in its then present but in some future shape and form." And it arose in another shape and form after it was broken into pieces by the incursions of the northern nations, the barbarian tribes that came and broke it up.

"The beast has seven heads and ten horns which are the well-known markers and symbols of the Roman Empire, the seven heads alluding to the seven mountains whereon Rome was situated and the seven forms of government which successfully prevailed, successively prevailed there," as I mentioned before, "and the ten horns signifying the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided. It is remarkable," he goes on, "that the dragon had seven crowns upon his heads but the beast has upon his horns ten crowns so that there had been in the meanwhile a revolution of power from the heads of the dragon to the horns of the beast and the sovereignty which before was exercised by Rome alone was now transferred and divided among ten kingdoms." But the Roman Empire was not divided into ten kingdoms until after it had become Christian and was broken up, and so we'll talk about this a little more in a moment.

Verse 2 in chapter 13 now to tie this together if we can,

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

Now in Daniel 7 we read the first three beasts he saw in his vision were like a lion, a bear, and a leopard, and what does John say here? Like unto a leopard, a bear and a lion. It's settled among commentators, pretty much universally settled that Daniel's beasts are, Daniel's first three beasts were the Babylonians, the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, and the Greek Empire. His fourth beast devoured and broke in pieces these three preceding empires, so it was a composite of the strengths of all of them. It is, again, pretty much settled that the fourth beast of Daniel's vision represents the pagan or Imperial Roman Empire. The first beast of Revelation 13 also sounds very much like Daniel's fourth beast, as we have said, which consumed the first three of Daniel's, and the Roman Empire did consume the remnants of the empires of the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians and the Greeks.

The beast from the sea in Revelation 13, Daniel's fourth beast in Daniel 7 are quite certainly the same, a symbol of the Roman Empire. John's beast from the sea represents the Roman Empire in a later form, which we'll talk about momentarily.

The Western Roman Empire, which is what most laymen mean when they refer to the Roman Empire, the Western Roman Empire ended with the invasion of the Goth tribes and the abdication of Emperor Romulus Augustulus in 476 AD. 326 years later on December 25 in the year 800 AD, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Supreme Emperor. Actually his official title was Imperator or Augustus, Imperator Augustus. That is the very title that the Roman Emperors called themselves. That was their prime title, Imperator Augustus.

Charlemagne was crowned by the pope as Imperator Augustus, Supreme Ruler of what they called the New Roman Empire. That's what it was called at the time, the New Roman Empire. It's better known to us and to history as its later name, the Holy Roman Empire. So the New Roman Empire or Holy Roman Empire was a creation of the Vatican ultimately, and it was actually, in fact, ruled by the pope, not by Charlemagne or anyone else. He was in many ways a figurehead.

The Holy Roman Empire was the main political arm of the papacy and existed in one form or another for a thousand years until 1806. Revelation 13, the last part of verse 2, "and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Now "seat" means throne. "Great authority" is the ability to command obedience through convincing demonstrations of power such as armies and signs and wonders. Daniel and Revelation teach us that Satan himself was the power behind the throne of all these empires, both their political thrones and their religious thrones.

Verse 3, "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." Now most Reformed Protestant

commentators believe the seven heads represents seven successive kingdoms in order. This is indicated by Revelation 17:10 when the angel says to John, "there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short space." So the angel says to John, "There are seven kings, five are in the past, one is presently ruling, and one is yet to come." Now the sixth head or kingdom, okay, we'd say there were seven kingdoms, the sixth head as we see from Revelation 17:10, there were five in the past, six now is, number six now is, so number six is in existence in John's time. The other five kingdoms are gone. Now by kingdom, you know, the most powerful government, the most powerful kingdom in existence in John's time, you know the answer to that, the Roman Empire. It was the pagan Roman Empire, of course. This is the first century. The five most powerful kingdoms that preceded the Roman Empire in world history were the empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. The Imperial Roman Empire is the sixth kingdom.

There's a seventh kingdom which was not yet in existence in John's time. Now the question what is the seventh kingdom? Notice here in 3 it says one of his heads were as it were wounded to death. This will help us identify the seventh kingdom. The New King James translates this, "as if it had been mortally wounded," meaning it looked like it should have died but it didn't die completely. Now this is difficult because the verse doesn't say which head is wounded here, but if this list of successive kingdoms is the correct interpretation, I think it's clear it probably is. It cannot be the first five kingdoms since they're already in the past. It can't be Egypt or Assyria or something. It can't be the seventh since it's not in existence yet.

So there are seven kings, five are in the past, one is, the other is not yet come. The only kingdom it can be is the sixth one that it must be the Roman Empire that suffers this deadly wound, the Imperial or pagan Roman Empire since that was the one then. The Roman Empire came into existence after the fall of the Macedonian or Greek Empire and lasted until Rome itself was sacked by the Goths in the fifth century, again the Western Roman Empire. Many Protestant theologians believe that this wound is the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the Barbarian tribes in AD 576. The government of the Goth kings over the former Roman Empire was a lot, much the same as the government of the Roman Emperor itself. Rome became a poor dukedom, a tribute to the Gothic kings. She was on life support, basically a shell of her former self, but she didn't die. She was healed by papal Rome and revived as the New Roman Empire or the Holy Roman Empire.

Now this is the key to understanding this passage, I believe. The Roman Empire suffered an almost fatal wound in 476 AD when it fell to the Goths, but it was resurrected from the dead, almost dead, by papal Rome and eventually became the Holy Roman Empire. The first beast, then, is apparently the post-Constantine Roman Empire which was revived by the second beast, papal Rome, to become the New Roman Empire better known to history as the Holy Roman Empire.

Now to make this perhaps even a little clearer, let me read from a portion from a book called "The Seventh Vial" by the Reverend J. A. Wylie, who was the author, you may recognize that name, the author of a book I've recommended many times, "The History of

Protestantism." He's also written a number of excellent books. This book he wrote in 1840 and he writes about the ten horns, "And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings," which is mentioned in Revelation 17:12. Not individual kings as we've talked about but lines of rulers or kingdoms which have received no kingdom as yet, an intimation that their appearance was still future.

"The Empire, the Roman Empire had to be broken in pieces by the shock of the barbarous nations, and out of what had been one undivided monarchy, ten distinct and independent kingdoms were to arise. It is well known that such was the origin of the ten Roman kingdoms of Europe. Let us trace the boundary line of the western empire. The wall of Hadrian, dividing Scotland from England, forms the boundary on the north. This line we prolong across the German Ocean to the Rhine. We ascend that river to Baden-Baden; then strike eastward to the source of the Danube, which we descend to Belgrade, and thence in a south-western direction, across the Adriatic and Mediterranean, to the great desert of Africa. This line will include the Roman empire of the west; and on this platform were the ten kingdoms to arise. We should expect that these ten kingdoms would be formed not long after the Gothic invasion, for the beast emerged from the flood, with all the ten horns already apparent. We are disposed to take the era AD 532. At that epoch we find the following ten kingdoms within the limits we have traced: — the Anglo-Saxons; the Franks of central, the Allaman-Franks of eastern, and the Burgundic-Franks of south-eastern France ; the Visigoths; the Suevi; the Vandals; the Ostrogoths in Italy ; the Bavarians; and the Lombards. Great changes have occurred at various periods in Europe. Some of its states have fallen, and others have arisen; but from the Gothic invasion to the present era, ten has been the prevailing number of its kingdoms."

Well, you know this sermon has included a lot of history and I don't want to confuse you with too much information so I'm gonna draw it to a close. A sermon is not all information, as we know. As well, it's not a history lecture, although history is very important particularly when we're studying the book of Revelation. It is necessary to know the history because as I've said many times, Revelation is a history book, a history of past events and events yet to come.

So to summarize. The consensus of the historic Protestant theologians is that this first beast that comes out of the sea represents a disintegrating post-Christian Roman Empire which becomes the ten kingdoms, and a part of which becomes the Holy Roman Empire, political arm of the papacy. So to look ahead beginning in chapter 13, verse 11, the second beast has always been interpreted by historic Protestantism, I won't say always but a preponderance of interpreters that I've consulted, as the Roman Communion, better known as the Roman Catholic Church. It gave life to the old Imperial Roman Empire by reforming it as the New Roman Empire, making it appear that the Empire survives. Thus the Roman Empire said in verse 3 of chapter 13 to be wounded but healed. Verse 3, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed."

The beast's wound is the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the Barbarian tribes in AD 476. And do you know what ultimately caused that fall, the end of that once mighty empire that ruled the known world? It was not the Barbarian invasion. The tribes were

certainly the immediate cause, the tool in the Lord's hands, but the fall of Rome was ultimately caused by the finished work of Christ on the cross. You see, the once mighty Roman Empire, the ruler of the world, was staggered due to the political impact of the work of Christ on the cross. Remember the book of Revelation was written to the persecuted church of the first century, persecuted by the Roman Empire. Jesus repeatedly encourages, commands the believers to overcome, that is, to be strong in their faith. He says such things as, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life," Revelation 2:7. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life," Revelation 2:10. "And he that overcometh and keepeth my words until the end, to him will I give power over the nations," Revelation 2:26. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels," Revelation 3:5. "And him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God," Revelation 3:12. "And to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," Revelation 3:21.

But these encouragements and warnings are also written directly to us, the members of the body of Christ, the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are reminded of the fact that the Lord's last words on the cross, "It is finished," are infinitely deep in their meaning, and among what is finished is the Roman Empire that put him to death. What was not finished can never be finished is the life of Christ who was physically resurrected from the grave, whose Spirit is with us now, and who will return bodily when every eye will see him and every mouth confess that he is Lord of lords.

We are given the command to overcome during times of trial, during times of persecution and, yes, even unto death just as our Lord Jesus did. So those who read the book of Revelation, even though they might disagree on its meaning, all agree that it is above all a book of consolation and cheer, God's final message to his people to take heart in the absolute certainty of his victory. We're given the promise that to be on the side of Christ is to be on the side of victory. We're given the knowledge that in all the wars, all the sufferings and disappointments and tragedies of our lives, all of that is being orchestrated by the unseen hand of God himself for the good of his people.

The book of Revelation gives us absolute assurance that Christians are under God's special protection; that whatever happens to us, we are assured of everlasting happiness ahead. So seize this blessed assurance, Christian. Make it your life for the Lord purchased it for you by paying the ultimate price. Your future is one of eternal happiness and peace.

I'll close with Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen.

Let us pray.