

# The Beast from the Sea

## Prelude to the Last Conflict

With this session we move into unfulfilled prophecy. As we do this, we must keep in mind what Jesus once said to His followers: “I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe” (John 14:29).

Prophecy is best understood when it comes to pass. Before they occur, events spoken of in prophecy can seem impossible. Knowing if these events could actually happen can be puzzling at times. Remember, Jesus said to His followers, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city” (Luke 21:20, 21). They must have wondered: “How could that happen? If an army surrounds Jerusalem, how could any one escape?”

Years later the Romans surrounded the city and had Jerusalem at their mercy. But then the Romans withdrew, the city gates were opened and the Jews pursued them, slaughtering many.

Followers of Jesus inside the city saw their chance. They remembered what Jesus had said and left the city. Later, the Romans returned and captured the city. There was a great slaughter of Jews, but not one Christian lost their life. They had followed what Jesus had said and were saved.

## Part of the Scroll's Sour Message

Remember we are now in the second half of the book, looking at the contents of the open

scroll. We will be learning more about the sour stomach experience as it relates to the death of the Two Witnesses.

We are going to deepen our understanding regarding the experience Jesus' followers will face at the end-time when they are called to preach the gospel. We are told there is going to be a conflict at the end, a final showdown with the forces of evil.

The dragon tries to work against God's plans for this earth and urges those who dwell on the earth to side with him. We will see how he works through counterfeiting the activities of God:

- There is a satanic trinity which is a counterfeit of the true Trinity.
- The mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16, 17) is the antithesis of the seal of God (Revelation 7:1-4, 14:1-3).
- The three unclean spirits (Revelation 16:13-14) are the antithesis of the three angel's messages (Revelation 14:6-12).
- The woman city of Babylon (Revelation 17-18) is the antithesis of the bride of Christ the New Jerusalem.

Understanding this principle of counterfeit activities is important in correctly identifying the messages to Jesus' followers to help them remain loyal to Him during this testing time.

▷ Read Revelation 13:1-18

As we gain an overview of the chapter we can see the counterfeits by the dragon, the sea beast and the land beast at work.

## The Dragon

The dragon is a counterfeit of God the Father:

- God dwells in heaven. The dragon once had a place in heaven (Rev 12:7-9).
- God has a throne (Rev 4-5). The dragon has a throne (Rev 13:2).
- God gives power, throne and authority to Christ (Rev 2:27, 3:21). The dragon gives power, throne and authority to the sea beast (Rev 13:2 & 4).

## Sea Beast

The Sea Beast is the counterfeit of Christ by imitating Jesus' life and ministry on earth:

- Jesus acts in the authority of the Father (Rev 2:27). The sea beast acts with full authority of the dragon (Rev 13:2-4).
- Jesus came to show us what the Father is like (John 14:9). The sea beast looks like the dragon, having seven heads and 10 horns (Rev 12:3; 31:1).
- Jesus was slain and came back to life (Rev 13:8). The sea beast is slain and comes to life again (Rev 13:3).
- Jesus received worship and universal authority after His resurrection (Matt 28:18). The sea beast receives worship and universal authority after his death wound is healed (Rev 13:3-4, 8).
- Jesus' ministry is for three-and-a-half years. The sea beast has a career of 42 months (Rev 13:5).

## Land Beast

The land beast is revealed as a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit:

- Jesus said the Holy Spirit is another comforter like Him (John 14:26, 16:14). The land beast is called lamb-like (Rev 13:11).
- The Holy Spirit directs people to worship Christ (John 16:13-14). The land beast directs people to worship the sea beast (Rev 13:12, 15).
- The Holy Spirit performs great signs (Acts 4:30-31). The land beast performs great signs (Rev 13:13, 19:20).
- The Holy Spirit brought down fire from heaven at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The land beast brings down fire from heaven (Rev 13:13).
- The Spirit of God gives life and breath (Gen 2:7; John 3:8; Rom 8:11). The land beast gives life/breath to the beast's image (Rev 13:15).
- The Holy Spirit applies the seal of God to the forehead (Eph 1:13, 4:30; Rev 7:3). The land beast applies the mark of the beast to the hand or forehead (Rev 13:16).

[Adapted from "Revelation of Jesus Christ" by Ranko Stefanovic pages 369-371]

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## What is “The Last Conflict”?

This last great conflict must be seen in the context of the larger picture of the conflict that has been going on between God and Satan over the ages.

Satan said in Isaiah 14:13, 14:

“I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of the assembly; on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

Here is his last great attempt to do this. But as verse 15 puts it: “you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.” In these final chapters of Revelation, he is brought down finally, once and for all.

So Satan gathers reinforcements.

He stands on the seashore and watches a beast come out of the sea.

## The Sea Monster

▷ Read Revelation 13:1-10

Enter a sea monster.

The way in which this beast is described takes us back to Daniel 7:1-8, where four beasts come up out of the sea.

In Daniel, they are clearly identified as four kingdoms (see Daniel 7:17).

- Daniel 7:1-5 talks about a lion, a bear and a leopard all coming out of the sea.
- In Revelation 13:1-2, the sea beast has parts resembling a leopard, a bear and a lion.
- The horn power that arises in Daniel 7:25 rules for three-and-a-half “times.”
- This sea monster exercises authority for 42 months.



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## The Big Picture

We learned of the dragon’s frustration at not being able to overcome the Child or His followers in Revelation 12. So the dragon goes away to prepare for the final battle. In Revelation 13 he enlists for support two allies: the beast from the sea (verses 1-10) and the beast from the earth (verses 11-18).

Another guide post is provided in Revelation 12:17, summarising what has happened and introduces what is about to come. The frustrated dragon, at the end, will make war against the remaining offspring of the woman. But we are also told that, at the end when this war takes place, there will be people who will remain loyal to God.

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## Transfer of Power

In Revelation 13, we have the same situation. As the empire was sinking, Constantine left Rome and founded a safer city from which to rule, calling it Constantinople. In doing this he paved the way for the church in Rome to rise to power, to dominate most of Christendom for more than 1,000 years, a period known as the Dark Ages. Thus, pagan Rome handed its seat and authority to Christian Rome.

History shows it is never wise to have a unity of any religion with the powers of the state. Whenever this happens it leads to intolerance of political and religious minorities. When this happens to any form of Christianity it always deflects the church from its main task of preaching the good news about Jesus Christ.

We can see that identifying the beast in Revelation 13 follows from the study of Daniel. Early Christians no doubt saw the beast as Rome, but never in their wildest imagination could have believed the empire might become Christian. It did—but at a price.

The church population grew from 5 million to 35 million in less than a century. Sun-worshippers came into the church like a flood. This was one of the reasons why the Sabbath was changed to Sunday.

## Little Horn's Powers

As we saw in Daniel 7:24, 25, Rome became a divided empire, symbolised by the 10 horns. And from this a little horn rises.

The little horn rises to:

1. Destroy three other powers of the 10;
2. Speak great words against God;
3. Try to change the set times and laws; and
4. Have power over God's people for three-and-a-half "times."

History shows this was fulfilled with the rise of the great medieval church, which met every specification.

**Notice how Revelation 13 is telling us the same story about the beast power:**

1. **The beast power receives its authority**

**from the dragon power in the form of pagan Rome.**

2. **The beast power speaks blasphemies against God.**
3. **The beast power is given authority to rule for 42 months.**
4. **The beast power has a mark.**

We will see a link between the last point and the horn's power in thinking itself able to change the times and laws of God.

Making sure we do our research in Daniel before we go too far in this chapter helps keep us on track in our understanding.

## The Sea Beast's Counterfeit Worship

The beast promotes a counterfeit form of worship: it is at war involving the commandments of God, particularly the first table which deals with whom, how and when we are to worship.

Notice how often the word "worship" appears in this chapter.

## The Sea Beast's Counterfeit Resurrection

Revelation 13:3 speaks about one of the seven heads receiving a fatal wound; but the fatal wound is healed.

This alludes to the cross where Jesus was slain, as the same word is used in Revelation to the lamb being slain (see Revelation 5: 6, 9, 12; 13: 8). The language referring used here suggests that the mortal wound of the beast was like that of a slain lamb. Using the same word, the wound of the sea beast is a clear parody of the death of Jesus Christ.

Now, if the beast is slaughtered to *death*, what does it mean for the "wound of his death" to be healed? A resurrection! The sea beast has a death and a resurrection like that of Jesus Christ.

But this counterfeit has even more to it. Revelation 13:1 describes the beast as having 10 horns and seven heads. It looks just like the dragon! Jesus said: "Anyone who has seen



Jesus warned His followers that they would face deceptions from false prophets who would come to them in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7: 15) | Kevin Carden | Lightstock

Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). And anyone who has seen the sea beast has seen the dragon!

Revelation 13:2 tells us that "the dragon gave [him] his power and his throne and great authority." This reminds us of Matthew 28:18 where Jesus says: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me."

Just as Jesus received His authority from the Father, the sea beast obtained its authority from the dragon.

### The Sea Beast's Counterfeit Ministry

The sea beast also has a ministry. According to Revelation 13:5, that ministry is 42 months long (three-and-a-half years) which is the same duration of Jesus' ministry on earth.

The sea beast is a clear counterfeit of God the Son, Jesus Christ. At the end of time, as part of a great worldwide deception, a counterfeit trinity—the dragon, the sea beast and the land beast—stands in the place of God.

In the last days of earth's history, Satan brings in deception so carefully crafted that people will have difficulty telling which side is the right one.

The seven heads (see Revelation 17:9) of the beast are powers used by Satan to oppress the people of God.

The beast has been active throughout history through one after another of its heads. It represents all oppressive world powers that have been against the church right through history.

When one of the beast's heads is wounded it ceases to be active. When it is healed it resumes its activities.

One of the heads is the medieval church which ruled for more than 1,000 years. It was an age of intolerance but it was brought to an end by a series of events:

- The Renaissance.
- The Reformation.
- The rise of urbanism.
- The Enlightenment.
- The French Revolution, which led to the French taking the Pope prisoner in 1798.
- The American Revolution, which led to democracy and the separation of religious and political powers.
- Secularisation of society.
- Nationalism.

All these events and movements combined to



wound the beast and take away its power to dominate others.

But Revelation 13 tells us the wound will be healed one day.

Eventually, church and state will combine again, just as they did against Christ. The sea beast works by force to terrify God's people.

## False and Deceptive Worship

Revelation 13 also reveals there will be a false religious revival resembling Pentecost (see verse 13), caused by the lamb-like beast coming up out of the earth.

The land beast will work through deception. It will confuse people.

The word *deception* is a key word that Jesus used in His sermon about the end of the world in Matthew 24:

"Watch out that no-one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."

He also said to be careful of false signs and miracles (*verse 24*). Jesus said, if they say to us he is out in the desert, don't go there (*verse 26*).

He knew there would be deception with miracles right at the end and they would come from within the ranks of professing Christendom. This will be confusing to His followers.

Earlier in Matthew 7:21-23, He warned us about false prophets supposedly working miracles in His name but who are actually against the law of God ("the will of My Father").

### Checking the Lawless One's ID

Another passage focusing on the end-time event is 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10. Here miracles, deception and the "lawless one" are described:

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"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders..."

Literally, the lawless one means "the one who is against the law of God."

In 2 Thessalonians 2:4, we are told this "man of lawlessness" has been where he ought not to have been: in the temple of God—the church.

"He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, pro-claiming himself to be God."

He wants to take the place of God. This lawless one even has a coming or a *parousia* this is the same word used to describe the coming of Jesus. He will counterfeit the second coming of Jesus with signs and wonders.

### He Walks the Walk and Talks the Talk

▷ Read Revelation 13:5, 6

The beast from the sea behaves in a manner that makes perfect sense from a human perspective. If we want to be great and highly regarded by others, we "talk big things," as does the beast. We let everyone know how spectacular we are. And it doesn't hurt our image to talk against God. And we don't forget to walk with a swagger! Then people will conclude we're really something.

How the gospel goes against the grain.

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The sea beast is attempting to take the place of Jesus Christ in the hearts of earth's inhabitants. And he succeeds to some extent.

But for the real Jesus, greatness does not appear in big talk, swearing, and swaggering.

Real greatness is characterised by a basin and a towel (see John 13). It humbles itself even to the point of death (see Philippians 2:5-8).

True greatness does not come from following the beast, but from following the Lamb. What comes out of our mouth reveals our true character.

▷ Read Revelation 13:7-10

### Endurance and faithfulness will be rewarded

At the end-time, those same types of power that have dominated God's people throughout the course of history will again arise and win the allegiance of most of the world. But they will not have the allegiance of those who follow the Lamb.

Jesus warned that those who take up the sword will perish by the sword (see Matthew 26:52). God will bring to justice those who seek to destroy His people. Just as they have paid out on others, so they will be dealt with.

God will not desert His people. But they will need to keep their trust in Him and patiently endure many hardships.

"This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints." Revelation 13:10