

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 27TH, 2024 // REVELATION

THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (REVELATION 12:18–13:4)

THIS EPIC DRAMA CONTINUES

Ch. 13 is a continuation of the epic cosmic battle between good and evil that John described in Ch. 12. John describes seeing the dragon (Satan) “[standing] on the sand of the sea” as if he was summoning “the beast from the sea.”

- Satan will wage his last battle against humanity using 2 people: “the beast from the sea” and the “beast from the earth.”

“...COMING UP OUT OF THE SEA”

Many in John's time feared uncharted waters, regarding the sea as a wild, untamed, and frightening place. Some believe this references the sea monsters of Jewish mythology, but this could also be referring to a “sea” of people on Earth.

- Either way, **John is painting a picture of something monstrous rising up.**

JOHN DESCRIBES THIS “BEAST”

The **10 horns** symbolize political institutions, and the **7 heads** may be the previous empires building up to the Antichrist and the last evil empire that he will lead. This “monster” has **10 diadems (crowns)**, 3 more than previously mentioned.

- Most likely this is a **symbolic way of communicating that this “beast” will be a political leader.**

“...ON ITS HEADS WERE BLASPHEMOUS NAMES”

Though the beast and the dragon are not the same, the beast is closely identified with the dragon as being like him. John, in his other writings (1 John 2:18–22, 4:3; 2 John 7) identifies this Satan-like beast as the Antichrist.

- The blasphemous names show some sort of **claim to divine status** and a **desire to be worshiped and adored.**

THE BODY OF THE “BEAST”

The description “**like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth like a lion's**” is in reference to Daniel 7, showing that this last empire will have traits of previous evil empires, Babylon (lion), Persia (bear), and Greek (leopard).

- This communicates that the **spirit of “antichrist” has been brewing for millennia, but here, it culminates in one evil person.**
- 1 John 4:3 (CSB)

“ONE OF ITS HEADS APPEARED...FATALLY WOUNDED”

Through the work of the dragon, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, we see that **Satan will mimic God with a blasphemous parody of the Trinity.**

- In an attempt to mimic and mock the death and resurrection of Jesus, the text indicates that the Antichrist will be “killed” and come back to life, **making people believe he is a god and a new messiah.**

“THE WHOLE EARTH WAS AMAZED”

Satan restores the Antichrist and gives him his authority. People who don't follow Christ will be led astray (12:9) to worship this man (and therefore Satan) as a savior, the way Psalm 89:6–8 tells us to worship God.

- It is one thing to respect and follow a leader, but it's another to view them as a savior. **There is one Savior, and He will never be a politician.**

WAGING WAR (REVELATION 13:5–10)

“THE BEAST WAS GIVEN A MOUTH...”

The first order of the beast is to “**utter boasts and blasphemies**” and to attack God's name and “**his dwelling—those who dwell in heaven.**”

- Eventually, **this violent rhetoric will lead to the physical assault on God's people on Earth—the saints.** This war will be permitted to wage for 42 months and culminates with the Antichrist proclaiming himself god (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

“AND [THE BEAST] WAS PERMITTED...”

V. 7 seems to indicate that God will allow Satan to “conquer” His people for a brief time. The beast's dominion and attacks will be global as Christians all over the world will be imprisoned and killed.

- Though it's hard to understand, **God has allowed whatever evil has and will happen to take place** (Job and Romans 13).
- Philippians 1:28–29 (CSB)

ARE WE LISTENING?

Jesus talked about “false prophets” in Matthew 24:24 that would deceive many people, even ones who had the appearance of being a Christian.

- Here we see that **those who have a superficial faith or do not believe will be deceived** (v. 8). **Those who are true Christians will not fall for the tricks and deceptions but will suffer for their faith** (vs. 9–10).

WE SHOULD LISTEN AND TRUST!

It seems that in those days, fighting against the Antichrist would be futile, and the only way to victory is steadfast faith and endurance in Jesus.

- This is a sobering reminder that **we all have an appointed time to die** (Hebrews 9:27) and that **God is in control.** Even if we never see these days described, **to live for Christ we will need endurance and faith.**

THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH (REVELATION 13:11–15)

ANOTHER BEAST (GREEK “OF ANOTHER KIND”)

John described the 1st beast from the “sea” and now sees a 2nd beast rising up from the Earth. The imagery of the 2nd beast coming out of the Earth isn't exactly clear.

- Most scholars agree **this will be a religious leader and charismatic speaker** who will perform miracles and persuade people to follow the Antichrist.

2 HORNS LIKE A LAMB, BUT SPOKE LIKE A DRAGON

This corrupt, evil religious leader will have the appearance of meekness and humility but will be like the dragon (Satan) in his motives (Matthew 7:15).

- This false teacher will deceive many by displaying “great signs” and “miracles.” This is why **we are not to be people who seek after signs.** Instead, **we test all things and worship in Spirit and Truth** (John 4:24).

A WORLDWIDE FALSE RELIGION

Another view is that the 2nd beast is not an actual person but simply a corrupt religion or a distorted version of our faith. People with this view believe **the beast represents things like Docetism, Relativism, and Universalism** that will sweep the Earth, persuading worship of the 1st beast.

- Unfortunately, **these things are already here and have crept into the church today.**

THE IMAGE OF THE ANTICHRIST

Satan will continue to mimic and mock the Triune God by distorting the things of God to further confuse humanity. In vs. 14–15, things get really weird when an “image” of the 1st beast is made and given “breath.”

- All we know is the image will have **the appearance of being alive and those who do not worship the image will be killed.**

THE MARK (REVELATION 13:16–18)

THE MOST DEBATED TOPIC...

The “**mark of the beast**” may be the most famous and talked about topic in the book of Revelation.

- Many have speculated that “the mark” will be barcodes, computer chips in cards or implanted in wrists, retinal scans, or face recognition software. It is possible that this isn't a literal mark but a belief (Revelation 7:3).

THIS IS CONNECTED SOMEHOW TO THE ECONOMY

It may be that the Antichrist's crowning achievement is economic, and anyone who does not show allegiance and loyalty to the beast will not be able to participate in the economy. This will have a **huge economic impact and change all commerce and exchanges of currency.**

- Anyone not wearing “the mark” will be **unable to feed their families and become social outcasts.**

SATAN IS UNORIGINAL AND COUNTERFEITS GOD

The number connected with the Antichrist's name is “666,” and the meaning of this number has been highly debated.

- The number 7 represents **perfection and balance**, and the Trinity in its perfection would be 777. Satan's unholy trinity is **imperfect and less than** God's, so Satan's parody would be 666.

THE RABBIT HOLE OF GEMATRIA

The understanding of this passage heavily depends on “**gematria**,” where special meaning in words and names is found by adding up the numerical values of letters.

- Gematria was very common in the 1st century. Today, this ancient practice is not used, so **exercising wisdom with these verses looks different for us than it did for ancient civilizations.**

“THIS CALLS FOR WISDOM”

As far back as 90 A.D. people have been trying to calculate empires and leaders in an attempt to see who the Antichrist is.

- The best use of wisdom for us is to first **confess our ignorance, use discernment**, and accept that **we will only know when the events unfold.** We must **major on the majors, pursue Christ**, and **prepare for His return.**

WISDOM AND TRUST

- True wisdom is **not fooling ourselves into thinking we are wise** (Proverbs 3:7; Romans 1:22) and **seeking wisdom from God** (James 1:5).
- **The only way to grow wise in the ways of the Lord and spot a counterfeit is to surround yourself with what is authentic and real.**
- True wisdom puts us in a place of trusting that **God is in control despite circumstances.**