

sermon study summary

Revelation Part 18 – The Two Beasts

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In Revelation 13:1-2, John describes the first beast coming out of the sea, symbolizing evil, chaos, and the demonic abyss. The beast, also called the antichrist:

1. Will be a political leader who will receive power and authority from Satan himself.
2. Represents both a brutal and evil kingdom. The ten horns and seven heads with 10 crowns on its horns represent his kingdom. Some think the 10 horns are 10 world leaders who will form a final 10-nation confederacy under the leadership of the antichrist who will not only rule them but the entire world (Rev. 17:9). Others believe the seven heads represent 7 consecutive world empires or kingdoms under Satan's dominion.
3. Both beasts (v.1, 11) will initially appear charming and wonderful (v.3), brilliant, inspirational and wise.

People will follow the antichrist because:

- a. He will have captivating and charismatic, his powerful speaking gift capable of swaying the masses.
 - b. Some believe that one of the kingdoms, representing the ancient Roman empire, is revived in a new way (v.3a). Others believe that the antichrist will be killed (or his death faked) and then appear alive again.
4. Is given permission by God to utter proud words and to blaspheme God and slander His name (v.5).
 5. Is given permission by God to wage war against God's people and to conquer them (v.7) for 3.5 years.
 6. A day is coming when the antichrist will rule the world (1 John 2:18 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3). Verse 10 reminds us to be faithful and to endure patiently.

In verse 11, a second beast, the 'false prophet' will be raised up to make the earth worship the antichrist. He will subtly deceive with signs and wonders (v.13), and will lure the world to worship the antichrist. Satan is the master counterfeiter and just as God is a Trinity, Satan determines to form the satanic, false and unholy trinity, with Satan (representing the imperfect man – 666) counterfeiting God the Father. The antichrist counterfeits God's Son, Jesus, and the false prophet counterfeits God the Holy Spirit. The false prophet will force everyone to receive a mark on their hand or forehead (v.16), mimicking the seal God's people were given (Revelation 7). Those who refuse to take the mark will not be able to buy or sell which would ultimately result in starvation (v.16), or they will be executed (v.15).

How can we apply this message to our lives?

First, we need to stay focused on Jesus and His promise that we are His and He will never leave us nor forsake us. Satan is allowed to hurt us, make us suffer and can even take our lives, but he cannot take away our faith in Christ. Jesus commanded us not to fear but to focus on Christ. Preach Jesus right to the end. Satan is under God's authority, and one day God will put an end to Satan and His sinister ways.

Secondly, we need to decide now whose mark we will take. Who will we truly worship and surrender our lives to completely?

Why is it so important to keep the Lord at the center of our affection and loyalty?

1. Because He requires it. The greatest commandment is, "You shall have no other gods before me". In Deuteronomy 6:5 we read "Love the Lord your God with all your soul and with all your strength."
2. "So that it will go well with you" (Deuteronomy 6:18). Psalm 62:1 says we will only find true rest, true joy and peace, satisfaction and fulfillment in God alone.

THE WORD (NIV)

Revelation 13:1-18

13 The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. **2** The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. **3** One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. **4** People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?"

5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. **6** It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. **7** It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

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sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is your favourite good versus evil book or movie? What was your takeaway from it?
2. Name some things that we pursue that we know are simply distracting us from what we know we should do. Why are we drawn to them?

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read *Revelation 13:1-18* and *2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 9-10*. Compare and contrast the two beasts. How do they mimic/mock the Trinity? In what ways do they deceive people? How is Revelation 13:8-9 both a promise and a warning to us?
4. Note *Revelation 13:8-10, 18*; *1 John 2:18*; *2 Thessalonians 2:1-8*; *Deuteronomy 13:1-5*. How are we to respond to these events? In what ways do Paul and John encourage us in our faith?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. The beasts assault and twist both society and the church. Where do we see the spirit of antichrist today in these institutions? How should we prepare now to stand firm against deception and increasing persecution? What must be our focus and mission?
6. How have you been distracted from the simplicity of devotion to Christ toward idols or other things, or from the mission that you have? How did you recognize you had strayed and what was your path back to Christ?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Reflect on 1 Corinthians 10:1-14. Even with God among them, the Israelites fell to idol worship. Examine your life. In what ways is the Spirit prompting you to keep your focus on Jesus or to step out and use your gifts for His kingdom? Share your reflections with a friend and ask them to help you be a more faithful follower of Jesus.

THE WORD (NIV)

Revelation 13:1-18 cont'd

⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.

¹⁰ "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go.

If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed."

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

¹¹ Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³ And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. ¹⁴ Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶ It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 9-10

³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

This week's writers:

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