

VICTORIOUS LIFE CHURCH BIBLE STUDY
SERIES: THE BOOK OF REVELATION
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REVELATION 13 THE BEAST, THE ANTICHRIST, FASLE PROPHET
AND THE MARK

Revelation 13

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.

This chapter contains four of the most iconic concepts contained in Revelation. The two "beasts" described here are the figures often referred to as the Antichrist and the False Prophet. The symbol mandated for all followers of Antichrist, administered by the False Prophet, is the mark of the beast, which is further related to the number 666.

John's vision of a beast rising from the sea.

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

The first beast is described as coming from the sea. Most interpreters see this as a reference to the Mediterranean, and this person as a political-military leader with roots in that area. The description of this creature is peculiar, but entirely symbolic, with each aspect representing part of that figure's power or character. This figure will be empowered by Satan to exert near-unlimited power over the earth. This includes persecution and murder of Christians, accompanied by overt blasphemy against God, and cult-like worship from the people of earth. In most interpretations, this is the end-times figure popularly referred to as the Antichrist (Revelation 13:1–10).

Then I stood on the sand of the sea: In Revelation 12, John's vision mainly had *heaven* in view. Now the scene of his vision shifted to the earth, and in his vision he **stood on the sand of the sea**. Many people today love **the sea**, but as a whole the Jewish people in

Biblical times regarded the sea as a wild, untamed, frightening place. Because ancient Israel was wary of **the sea**, it was a figure of evil and chaos that seemed to resist God, though the resistance was unsuccessful:

For God is my King from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.
(Psalm 74:12-13)

LORD God of hosts, who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them.
(Psalm 89:8-9)

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. (Isaiah 57:20)

And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea: From the place identified with evil and chaos and resisting God, a **beast** comes forth. The ancient Greek word translated **beast** here has the idea of a wild, dangerous animal. Because John calls him a **beast** and not a *dragon* (as in Revelation 12:3), this creature represents someone distinct from Satan who was represented by the dragon (Revelation 12:9).

Having seven heads and ten horns: Though this **beast** is distinct from the dragon of Revelation 12, he is still closely identified with him. He is not the dragon, but he is *like* him, because the dragon also had **seven heads and ten horns** (Revelation 12:3). Any creature with **seven heads** would be hard to kill, because if you wounded one head, six still remained. In Biblical imagery **horns** express strength and power. A bull with two horns is a powerful creature, but a **beast with ten horns** has that much more power – just

like the dragon of Revelation 12:3. This likeness to Satan is just one of the things that identifies this **beast** with the one popularly known as the *Antichrist*. The word *Antichrist* only appears in the Bible five times in four verses.

1 John 2:18 *Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming.*

1 John 2:22

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:3

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

2 John 7

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

With this, John referred to an individual who has captured the imagination of many people, some who don't even know the Bible. But many are ignorant about this person called *the Antichrist*, except what they have learned from movies. like *The Omen*, *The Devil's Advocate*, *Carrie*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *Eli*.

We can begin by understanding what the title *Antichrist* means. The prefix *anti* may mean "the opposite of" or "instead of." The Antichrist is the "opposite Jesus"; he is the "instead of" Jesus. Most people have focused on the idea of the "opposite Jesus." This has made them think that the Antichrist will appear as a supremely evil person, that as much as Jesus went around doing good, he will go around doing bad. As much as Jesus' character and personality was

beautiful and attractive, the Antichrist's character and personality will be ugly and repulsive. As much as Jesus spoke only truth, the Antichrist will speak only lies. This emphasizes the idea of the "opposite Jesus" too much. The Antichrist will instead be more of an "instead of Jesus." He will look wonderful, be charming and successful. He will be the ultimate winner, and appear as an angel of light. In this sense the Antichrist will be a satanic messiah, *instead of* the true Messiah Jesus Christ.

In 1 John 2:18, John also spoke of *the Antichrist and many antichrists*.

1 John 2:18

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

There is a "spirit" of antichrist, and this "spirit" of antichrist will one day find its ultimate fulfillment in *the Antichrist*, who will lead humanity in an end-times rebellion against God. In other words, though the world still waits to see the ultimate revelation of the Antichrist, there are little "previews" of this man and his mission to come. These are the *antichrists* with a little "a." Though we commonly call this coming world leader the Antichrist, the Bible gives him many names or titles. He is known as:

The *little horn* of Daniel 7:8.

Daniel 7:8

8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

* The *king of fierce countenance* of Daniel 8:23.

Daniel 8:23

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

· *The Prince that shall come* of Daniel 9:26.

Daniel 9:26

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

· *The willful king* of Daniel 11:36-45.

· The one who comes *in his own name* of John 5:43, whom Israel will receive as a messiah.

John 5:43

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

· *The son of perdition, the man of sin, the lawless one* of 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

And on his horns ten crowns: This is something *different* about the **beast** compared to the dragon of Revelation 12:3, who had *seven diadems on his heads*. The seven crowns of the dragon expressed his strength and power, because seven is a number associated with strength and completeness. The **ten crowns** of the **beast** express his rule over a group of ten nations. Most commentators think that the **ten horns** are distributed among the seven heads, but others sees all **ten horns** upon one of the heads. The figure of **ten horns** also associates this **beast** with the beast of **Daniel 7:7**, which represent the final world empire of the Antichrist, which the Messiah will ultimately conquer:

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in

pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.” (Daniel 7:7)

In Daniel’s vision, the *ten horns* specifically represented *ten kingdoms* that this final world dictator has authority over (**Daniel 7:24**). In John’s vision the **ten crowns** on the **ten horns** emphasize this idea.

The visions of Daniel 7 and Daniel 2 also connect the governments represented by the **ten crowns** with the ancient Roman Empire. In those visions, Daniel saw three successive world empires, each succeeded by a fourth – which in the context of the visions is plainly the Roman Empire. In the days of that fourth empire the Messiah will come, destroy all earthly rule and reign over the earth. Since we do not see the reign of Jesus on earth in the way Daniel prophesied, we can see that the Roman Empire will “resume” in some way, expressed by this collection of **ten crowns**.

And on his heads a blasphemous name: The seven heads of the **beast** each advertise blasphemy against God. This speaks of more than the beast’s message; it speaks of his character. He is a blasphemer, who speaks against God (as in Daniel 7:25).

The description of the beast of the sea again connects it to images from Daniel 7.

Daniel 7:1-6

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And 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.

Revelation 13:2

Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

Like a leopard... a bear... a lion: In this vision, God used images from Daniel's vision of Daniel 7 to communicate the identity and nature of this **beast** to John. Daniel 7 used four animals (*beasts*) to describe the course of human government from Daniel's time until the ultimate reign of Jesus on this earth. The first three animals are a **lion** (in Daniel, a picture of the Babylonian Empire), a **bear** (a picture of Medo-Persian Empire), and a **leopard** (a picture of the Greek Empire). The fourth animal was a dreadful, indescribable beast which shared the most terrifying characteristics of the previous beasts, yet represents the final world empire under the leadership of a Satanic dictator (Daniel 7:7-8). John presents this **beast** as the extension of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, connecting his empire with the characteristics of the great empires of the past. This final world empire will have the catlike vigilance of a **leopard**, the slow and crushing power of a **bear**, and the authority and ferociousness of a **lion**. Since the beasts of Daniel 7 represented empires more than specific men, some have thought that the **beast** of Revelation 13 is not a person, but a government or a cultural system. But others see the **beast** as a person, specifically the Antichrist – the final Satanic dictator who leads the world in rebellion against God.

Now the beast which I saw: All the indications in [Revelation 13](#) are that the **beast** is a man, though he is closely identified with his world-dominating government. Why?

* **The Beast is worshipped as a god;** but people never worship an empire as such; neither do they make a succession of emperors into an object of religious devotion. The paying of divine homage to kings has been a common thing in the world's history, but it has always been rendered to individuals.

* **An image is set up of the beast, and the whole world is commanded to worship it.** This makes far more sense if the **beast** is a man more than an empire or a government. Through history, men have often bowed down to an image of a political ruler.

* **This Beast also has a proper name** – a name expressive of a particular number, and that number ‘a number of *a man*,’ which cannot be conceived except on the idea of an individual person.

***This beast is finally damned.** He goes to perdition, into the lake of fire, where he continues to exist and suffer, after passing from this earthly scene (Revelation 17:11; 20:10), which cannot be true of systems of government.

* **The antichrist is also called *the son of perdition*** (2 Thessalonians 2:3), as was Judas (John 17:12). Judas was a man, not a system or a government, so it follows that the antichrist will also be a man.

A Bible Scholar named Seiss said : “We would therefore greatly err from the Scriptures, as well as from the unanimous conviction and teaching of the early Church, were we to fail to recognize this Beast as *a real person*, though one in whom the political power of the world is finally concentrated and represented.”

The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority: This world leader is really empowered and supported by Satan. Through this man, Satan will express his own desire and authority. In this, the beast takes the offer that Jesus refused (Matthew 4:8-10). The beast is not an ordinary man. He is called *the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit* (Revelation 11:7, 17:8), and ordinary men do not come from there.

“One who hails from that place must either be a dead man brought up again from the dead, or some evil spirit which takes possession of a living man... In either case, the Beast, as a person, is an extraordinary and supernatural being.” (Seiss)

It may be that Satan himself takes possession of this man, and this is what makes him exceptional. This was the case with Judas, who was possessed by Satan (John 13:27).

The beast and his wound.

And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

One of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded: This is a *head* wound, a *mortal* wound, not a superficial injury. Perhaps it is the result of God’s judgment against the beast.

And his deadly wound was healed: The recovery of the beast increases his fame and authority (**all the world marveled and followed the beast**). Twice later (Revelation 13:12 and 13:14) this recovery is mentioned in connection to the world's worship and devotion to the beast. This leads us to believe John speaks of a man who will be **mortally wounded** and then **healed**. The man will lead a revived Roman Empire, and his personality will dominate it – yet he and the empire are not exactly the same. This is truly an *Antichrist*, who even imitates Jesus in His death and resurrection. The world will believe this, and it will add tremendously to his fame and power.

The authority and popularity of the beast.

So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

As people worship this beast and bow down before his government, it may be that they do not know they are bowing down to Satan himself; but it is worship of Satan none the less. They clearly worship both the beast and the **dragon**, but their worship of the dragon may be unknowing. Though Satan worship becomes more and more popular each year, it is still only a tiny fraction of people who openly worship Satan. But this is because more people expect Satan to appear with ugliness and horror. This is wrong, *for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.* (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him? The world will be amazed at the power of the beast, and will believe he is so mighty that he cannot be conquered. For a time, the beast will look like a tremendous *winner*. When he blasphemes Jesus and persecutes God's people, they will appear to be complete losers – for a short time.

The beast's blasphemies.

And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

“Blasphemer” may be a more accurate title than “Antichrist” for this end-times dictator.

This beast is a man who speaks against God and everything God stands for (**His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven**). The beast continues without restraint by God for a period of **forty-two months** – the familiar three and one-half years. The duration of the period shows that the beast has full reign for the first half of the final seven years, and that during the whole time he is still under God's authority. Why does the beast **blaspheme... those who dwell in heaven**? This means he speaks against those who were taken in the rapture, and are therefore out of his reach.

The beast makes war against the saints.

It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 12 described the broad phenomenon of Satanic persecution during the tribulation period. Here, the main instrument of that persecution is revealed: the

government of the beast will persecute and kill all those who do not bow in worship to the beast. **Overcome** does not mean that the beast can overcome the faith of the saints, but that he can destroy their physical lives, and by all appearances defeat the cause of God's people on this earth. Who are these **saints** who are **overcome** by the beast? Various views of the timing of the rapture will determine who these persecuted ones are. Those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are God's people who come to Christ after the church has been raptured. Those who believe in a post-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are God's people who are on the earth before the final rapture, including what we think of today as the "church." Jesus said of the church, **that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)**. If this group of saints (a term not exclusively applied to the New Testament church) is overcome by Satan, perhaps they are not the same New Testament *church* that Jesus spoke of. **All who dwell on the earth will worship him**: This final world dictator will demand and receive worship from the whole earth. But those who worship him pay the price: they are **whose names have not been written in the Book of Life**.

How will **all who dwell on the earth... worship him**? It will probably be after the pattern of the worship demanded by the Roman Emperors in the days of the early church. There were times in the early church when all residents in the empire were required to burn a pinch of incense before a statue of Caesar and say, *Caesar is Lord*. Christians refused to do this and were persecuted because of it. The Romans saw it as an act of

political allegiance, but the Christians rightly saw it as an act of religious worship. After the great and terrible totalitarian rulers of the 20th Century (Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao), it isn't hard to imagine a dominating world leader demanding such a declaration of allegiance, tantamount to worship. The **Book of Life** contains the names of all God's redeemed (Revelation 20:15). The idea is that worshipping the beast and having your name in the **Book of Life** are mutually exclusive. **The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:** This deeply meaningful title for Jesus reminds us that God's plan of redemption was set in place before He even created the beings who would be redeemed. God wasn't "surprised" by the fall of Adam or any other evidence of the fallen nature of man. God isn't making it up as He goes along. It is all going according to plan.

- God the Son had a relationship of love and fellowship with God the Father *before the foundation of the world* (John 17:24).
- The work of Jesus was ordained *before the foundation of the world* (1 Peter 1:20).
- God chose His redeemed *before the foundation of the world* (Ephesians 1:4).
- Names are written in the Book of Life *before the foundation of the world* (Revelation 17:8).
- The kingdom of heaven was prepared for the redeemed *before the foundation of the world* (Matthew 25:34).

(9-10) A warning to all.

If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

This introduces a solemn word of warning, meant to capture the attention of all who hear. **He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity:** This means that the functionaries of the beast are not without guilt. Though these things are prophesied and part of God's predetermined plan, it does not lessen in the slightest way man's personal responsibility. If you work for the beast and lead others into captivity, you certainly shall go into captivity yourself. God will measure unto you what you have measured to others. This may have a secondary or additional meaning: there is no hope in fighting against the Antichrist. The only way of victory is steadfast faith and endurance in Jesus. **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints:** Though they are viciously attacked by the Antichrist and his followers, the saints of God must keep steadfast [faith](#) in the ultimate justice of God. He will reward their persecutors with persecution of His own.