

Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

Sermon #25 | Revelation 13:1-4 | The Antichrist, Part 1

Introduction: The Timing and the Urgency of The Events of Chapter 13

- In Revelation 12:1-6, the woman (Israel) gave birth to the child (the Christ), and the dragon (Satan) wanted to devour the child. These verses are an overview of spiritual world history, in brief. The dispensation of grace (in which we live) is hidden between verses 5-6.
- Revelation 7:12-17 tells of the future **war in heaven** (v. 7) which takes place sometime before the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation (and perhaps as early as the beginning of the tribulation). As a result of this war, Satan loses access to the “council chambers” of heaven. He takes out his frustration on the Jewish people for the last half of the tribulation. During this time, a place of protection keeps a remnant of the Jewish people alive.
- In chapter 13, we are introduced to the Antichrist. His work spans the entire seven years, but initially is “friendly” toward the Jewish people, before he turns on them and demands total allegiance.
- The vision of the antichrist reveals that which takes place chronologically somewhere just prior to the tribulation.
 - The Antichrist is released in seal #1.
 - The identity of the Antichrist may not be beyond “plausible deniability” until the midpoint of the tribulation.
- On the urgency of these events, note the use of *polysyndeton*, a figure of speech in which the conjunction *and* is used repeatedly.

Revelation 13:1-3 | The Nature of the Antichrist

- Textual note on verse 1: modern translations have the dragon (Satan) on the seashore, while the KJV has John on the seashore. While no significant doctrine is affected, they certainly don’t say the same thing.
- The Antichrist is described as a **beast** (v.1), just as Satan had previously been described as a dragon. Because we know that dragon was figurative language (see Rev. 12:9), and because the description of the beast doesn’t make plain sense, we are safe to interpret verses 1-3 as symbolic language. However, we must realize that the symbolic must symbolize, and so our task is to be faithful to allow Scripture to interpret these symbols.
- The beast had **seven heads and ten horns** (v. 1). Note that the dragon of Revelation 12:3 had the same appearance. The beast, it appears, is the *incarnation of the dragon*. He therefore becomes the second of three parts of the *unholy trinity*.
- In Daniel 7:7, the fourth beast (the Roman Empire) had ten horns, which are ten kingdoms.
- In Revelation 17:7-12, the heads and horns are discussed in more detail, and we will deal with the detail at that time.

- This beast has **the name of blasphemy** (v. 1). The Greek word, βλασφημία (*blasphemia*) comes from βλάπτω (*blapto*) - “to hurt” and φήμη (*pheme*) “to declare your thoughts publically.” The Antichrist has no qualms about publicizing his hatred for God.
- The beast was **like unto** three beasts: a leopard, a bear, and a lion.
 - These are the same descriptions Daniel used in Daniel 7 to describe the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, and Greece, except in reverse order (as if looking back through history).
 - Daniel then described a “dreadful and terrible beast” that was the fourth Kingdom, Rome.
 - Notice, however, that John says that the beast was **like unto**, and was not the actual kingdoms. This is problematic for the preterist interpretation that claims the beast IS the Roman empire.
- The beast received **his power, and his seat, and great authority** from Satan. This is the source of the amazing powers of the Antichrist: the devil. Here, Satan gives all authority for earthly rule to the Antichrist, just as God did to His Son (“all authority is given to me...”). Today, the devil is the “god of this age,” and he will give his authority to “Satan incarnate,” who is the Antichrist.
- One of the heads of the Antichrist was **wounded to death** and yet **healed** (v. 3). Many take this to be a “death, burial, and resurrection” of the Antichrist, and this could be true. Others take this to be the rising again of the Roman Empire. In the end, the result is the same: **all the world wondered** (v. 3).

Revelation 13:4 | The Worship of the Beast

- The world, filled with wonder, worships both the dragon and the beast (v. 4).
- Their worship appears to be based on his victories in war, as they proclaim, **who is able to make war with him?**
 - If the timing of this worship is at the first seal, then they soon find out, because the second seal brings war.
 - If the timing of this worship is after the fifth seal, then the people of the earth are simply so desperate for a “peacemaker” that they worship anyone/anything.
 - It is during the fifth seal that the **abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet** (Mt. 24:15) takes place.
 - Since this abomination takes place at the midpoint of the tribulation, and since Revelation 13:5 once again mentions a 42-month reign, it seems best to place verse 4 at the midpoint of the tribulation.
- Why would the world so uniformly abandon their religions and worship Satan and his incarnation, the Antichrist?
 - Because the world is desperate to worship *something*.
 - Because Satan provides a transcendence that man craves.
 - Because he is a great speaker and performs great wonders (v. 5 – more next session).