

REVELATION 13

THE BEAST

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THE FIRST BEAST—THE ANTICHRIST (13:1-10)

This first beast in Revelation 13 has been seen in many different ways—1. Any system that opposes God’s Kingdom. 2. Nero or some other Roman emperor. 3. The pope. 4. The Antichrist. In keeping with the tone of this work, we will identify him as the Antichrist.



THE ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST BEAST (1-2)

The Origin of the Beast (1a).

As John stood upon the sand of the sea he saw a beast coming out of the sea. In the Bible, the sea often represented the masses of people (Jer. 51:42; Eze. 26:3; Matt. 13:47). In this verse and Daniel 7:2-3 it refers to the raging nature of the worldly masses.

The Description of the Beast (1b-2).

This beast had seven heads and ten horns with ten crowns, each one had the name of blasphemy upon it. John continues to describe the beast in verse 2 as looking like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion and empowered by the dragon.

First, he had seven (*complete or perfection*) heads (*rulers*) which could refer to world dominion in general or the successive world powers (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the Revived Roman Empire under the Antichrist).

Second, he had ten horns with a crown on each horn and the name of blasphemy on each one. This represents ten kings who will rule at the time of Antichrist all of them speaking blasphemy against the Most-High God.

Third, this beast is swift like a leopard, brutal like a bear, and strong like a lion. These three animals represented the three kingdoms of Daniel 7, the leopard was Greece, the bear was Persia, and the lion was Babylon. This revived Roman Empire will be a culmination of all three.

Fourth, this beast will be empowered by the dragon, who is none other than Satan, himself.

THE DECEPTION OF THE FIRST BEAST (3)

The beast receives a deadly wound and is healed from it and as a result of it, the world will wonder after him. There are several views as to what this means.

- This world ruler receives a death blow, but is only faking death and resurrection since Satan cannot raise the dead (2 Thes. 2:9).
- This world ruler receives a fatal wound and is miraculously healed.
- This world ruler is killed and resurrected to life again. Some believe that since Satan is kicked out of heaven in Chapter 12, that he will literally possess the body of the Anti-Christ.
- Although the Roman Empire has been dormant, it will be revived under the leadership of the Anti-Christ.
- Some believe that this refers to the resurrection of Judas Iscariot since both men are called the "son of perdition" (Jn. 17:12; 2 Thes. 2:3).

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FIRST BEAST (4-5)

Satan's ultimate desire has finally come true, he receives worship instead of God (cf. Isa. 14:14). Unlike Christ who is worshipped for His Holiness, Righteousness, Love, Mercy, etc., The Antichrist is worshipped for his miraculous power, invincibility, and deceit (2 Thes. 2:8-12). The beast continued to speak blasphemies for 42 months or 3 ½ years (see also Dan. 7:8, 20; 2 Thes. 2:4). This probably refers to the latter half of the Tribulation.

THE VICTORY OF THE FIRST BEAST (6-8)

The object of the beast's blasphemy will be—**God** (Grk. pros ton theon, "face to face with God" in utter defiance), **His Name** (all that He stands for), **His Tabernacle** (the place of His presence), **The inhabitants of heaven** (angels and the redeemed).

The beast will be given power over all the earth, and he will persecute the saints to the point of death. He will hold all political power (Dan. 7:3) and all religious power (2 Thes. 2:4).

Once again we see that the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast. Notice that they are the ones whose names were not written the book of life.

A WARNING CONCERNING THE FIRST BEAST (9-10)

This verse is written to encourage the saints to be faithful during persecution. The New International Version reads, "He who has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints."

THE SECOND BEAST—THE FALSE PROPHET (REV. 13:11-18)

As with many concepts found in the Book of Revelation, the nature of the second beast is the subject of much speculation. There are three basic views regarding the identity of the second beast—1. A literal person. 2. The Catholic Church. 3. A religious system.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SECOND BEAST (11a)

Another beast comes out of the earth. "Another beast" *allo therion* (another of the same kind), the second beast was cut out of the same mold as the first beast. Unlike the first beast who rose "up out of the sea," this beast comes "up out of the earth." In the Scriptures the earth represents humanity (Ps. 33:8; 67:7; 96:1; 97:1; 98:9). Based on this, it most likely means he comes out of the mass of humanity. Since he seems to be religious (vss. 12, 15), it could mean that he comes out of the mass of religious humanity.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SECOND BEAST (11b)

He has two horns like a lamb, and speaks like a dragon. He will have the look of a lamb and the roar of a dragon. Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matt. 7:15).

THE DUTIES OF THE SECOND BEAST (12-18)

He promotes the worship of the first beast (12).

The fact that he promotes the worship of the first beast shows that his main function will be religious. Also note other references where he is called the false prophet (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

He causes fire to come down from heaven (13).

Elijah was a great prophet of God who did many miracles. One of the miracles that he performed was to cause the fire of the Lord to fall from the sky (1 Kings 18:36-39). When he did this, the people saw it and “they fell on their faces, and they said, The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God” (vs. 39). The false prophet will cause fire to come down from heaven and the people will worship the first beast (Rev. 13:12).

He deceives the world by performing miracles (14a).

One of the true signs of a prophet is the ability to perform miracles. Elijah and Elisha, two of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament, performed some of the greatest miracles in the Bible. As a result of the miracles they performed, many people glorify God. The false prophet will perform many miracles and he will be so convincing that if it were possible he would deceive God’s chosen people (Mk. 13:22).

He makes an image of the first beast to be worshipped (14b-15).

As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, the second beast (the false prophet) will glorify the first beast (the Anti-Christ). He constructs an “image” (Greek *eikon*) which is a figure or likeness of the Anti-Christ. In 2 Thessalonians 2:4 we read that the Anti-Christ (the man of sin, the son of perdition) will sit “in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” It may be a possibility that this image will be placed there when he is not there.

The second beast could give life to the image of the first beast. Some commentators have had problems with this fact because God is the only One who can give life. The explanation is found in the use of the Greek word *pneuma*, which is translated “spirit, breath or wind.” The normal Greek word for life is *bios*, which designates a living organism. The beast will not give life to the image but will empower the image to give the appearance of life.

He forces everyone to receive the mark of the beast (16-17).

The mark will be placed in the right hand or the forehead. The word mark (Greek *charagma*) is used to designate a stamped impression similar to a mark left by a branding iron. The significance of this may be seen in the fact that worshippers of different gods in the ancient world received a mark (*charagma*) to show their devotion to their deity. Those who refuse to receive the mark will be killed. Many of these individuals can most likely be identified with the worshippers around the throne in Revelation 7:9-17.