

## **Study 26: Revelation 13:1-10**

**1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.**

- Whatever this beast symbolizes, whether a specific government that existed in history or an underlying principle of governments that set themselves up in opposition to the kingdom of God, it is blasphemous in nature. It sets itself up against God and declares roles and to have powers that only belong to God.
- What the ten horns, seven heads and ten crowns represented is anyone's guess. There are plenty of theories, but they are just that: theories. No one knows for sure.
- The source of this beast is the depths of the sea, the unknown regions that men cannot see or comprehend.
- This may be a silly thought, but so many horror movies are portraying the unknown spiritual realm, which is terrifying to those who don't understand spiritual things. In horror movies, the evil usually runs rampant until one hero, whether through luck or sheer will power, overcomes the "beast." There is an element of spiritual truth in these, except for the fact that the good hero, Jesus, was neither lucky nor willful. He is the Son of God! Through the power of a righteous life, He overcame the evil that was running rampant on the earth.

**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.**

- There is always an element of devilish assistance with many evil empires. They are successful beyond their intelligence and resources. In modern times, the Soviet Union, Hitler and other totalitarian regimes had supernatural help of a demonic nature. The dragon gave them power and authority.
- This beast had an aggressive nature with great strength as represented by the symbols of the bear, lion and leopard. The nature of dictators is to expand their influence by force.

**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 astonished and followed the beast.**

- I just finished reading *Left Behind*, the fictional novel set in the end times as interpreted and predicted by many Christian circles. This novel depicts an antichrist that arises to take over the world through the United Nations. While I applaud the novel's and series'

- evangelistic approach, the authors attempts to depict actual events from a symbolic, apocalyptic book like Revelation are unfortunate. It represents a broad misunderstanding among Christians about the end times and the role of Revelation in describing them.
- Consider this scenario. This beast is shot in the head. Even in recent times, I think of how the world relaxed in a way when the Soviet Union no longer represented the threat that it was. But now, greater, more ruthless threats have arisen and the world is astonished. Billions of people who watched as people were enslaved by communism are now enslaved by a new world power and influence. It is a never-ending pattern of history.
- Just as you think one governmental or economic philosophy is dead, shot in the head so to speak, another arises to take its place and delude the world. That's what it was like when Revelation was written and that's what it's like today.

**4 Men 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 make war against him?"**

- When it comes down to spiritual things, the key issue is worship. Who will be worshipped? When the devil tempted Jesus, what was the issue? Worship! It's all about worship. The devil wants to be worshipped.

**Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him (Matthew 4:8-11).**

- The nations in their delusion actually believe they can withstand God! That is why I rejoice in the words and exhortation of Psalm 2:

**Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed**

**in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**

**5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.**

**6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.**

- As I get older, I realize to a greater extent than ever that God is in control. If something doesn't happen in my life, it is because God chooses not to have it happen. Period. Why do I say this here?
- This beast only does what he does because God gives him the power to do it. Note how he was given a mouth to utter blasphemies and how he had a fixed period in which to say those things. His authority to do these things came from outside himself. His authority came from God.
- Why would God do such a thing? As mentioned in earlier studies, it is because God wants all men to come to knowledge of him. When they refuse after repeated efforts on God's part to turn them to Him, God then gives them over to the desires of their hearts. If people continually reject the truth and choose a lie, then God will send a lie for them to believe, since that is what they want.
- Consider what Paul wrote to the Roman church:

**The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen (Romans 1:18-25).**

- Paul said that "God gave them over." I also think of Moses' dealings with Pharaoh. At first, the Bible says that Pharaoh hardened his heart. As time went on, it says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

**7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.**

- The beast's authority will be total, in that he will have an influence on the whole world. He will actually seem to prevail against the Church! But any victory he has will be short-lived, and he is under God's control. This seeming defeat of the Church will give him and his followers increased confidence of their ultimate victory, even against God. But they of course will be defeated not by the power of the Church, but by the power of God.
- Is there something in your life today that you need to accept as coming from the hand of God? God rules and reigns in all things. How can you apply this truth to what you are going through?

**8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast-- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.**

- As I mentioned above, it's all about worship. The beast and the dragon want worship; they want what only belongs to God.
- No one can be neutral where God is concerned. If they do not worship the true God, they will worship something. Many are looking for some end time government to fulfill this verse. There is no need. That is the way it's been since the beginning. You either worship God or something or someone else.
- I am glad my name is in the book. God has a sharp pencil and a big book and He knows all those who are His. Just like He protected Israel living in Goshen during the time of Moses, He will protect and preserve His church in the midst of the world system in which the Church functions. There will always be tough times, for the world system of the beast and dragon hate God and His church. But God is in control and He and His people will rule and reign forever.

**9 He who has an ear, let him hear.**

- The choice is yours. Will you fear the future and the power of the beast, or will you fear God, who is more powerful than any created being?
- I choose to follow and fear God. I have no fear of any beast, although I know the world system has great power that can inflict great suffering on me and those who follow God. I am not naïve, but I have made a choice to put my faith in the power of God. For that reason, I do not fear and I do not appreciate any teaching or philosophy that instills fear in the hearts of God's people.

**10 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.**

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- When I took my first missions trip, I went to Guyana, South America where I was traveling on piranha infested waters. Later I traveled to Cali, Colombia, considered the most dangerous city in the world. Since then, I have been to many “hot spots” where there is danger and trouble.
- I gave my life to the Lord on May 18, 1973. I will not take my life back from Him. If He chooses to take my life in some jungle or on a plane trip, that is none of my business. Some of us as we serve God may suffer imprisonment or even death. That doesn't mean that God has failed to live up to His promises. We must see it that God has a plan not only for our lives, but also for all the earth.
- In the midst of circumstances that are personally painful, we must be patient and faithful. That is what God requires. The message to the Revelation churches and to us is to endure hardship, even persecution. Jesus said that the world would hate us. The world hated and killed Jesus; can we expect any better treatment?