

The Book of Revelation

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

Class recording and notes will be available on https://www.purifiedbyfaith.com/

Image credit – https://www.bible.com/events/84698

High Level Outline of the Book of Revelation

- Introduction (1:1-8)
- Jesus Among the Seven Churches (1:9-20)
- Letters to the Seven Churches: (2-3)
- The Throne of God and the Lamb (4-5)
- Three Sets of Divine Judgments (6:1-16:21)
  - Seven Seals (6:1-17; 8:1)
    - Interlude Between Seal 6 and 7: Sealing of the 144,000 (7:1-8); Great Multitude Before the Throne (7:9-17)
  - Seven Trumpets (8:2-9:21; 11:14-19)
    - Interlude Between Trumpet 6 and 7: Angel and the Scroll (10:1-11); Measuring the Temple (11:1-2); The Two Witnesses (11:3-13)
  - Interlude Between Trumpets and Bowls: Persecution, Deliverance and Judgment (12–14)
  - Seven Bowls (15–16)
- The Fall of Babylon (17:1-19:10)
- The Last Battle (19:11-20:15)
- The Marriage of Heaven and Earth (21:1-22:5)
- Epilogue (22:6-21)

The Beast From the Sea (13:1-10)

13:1 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. 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 astonished and followed the beast. 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?"

The Beast From the Sea (13:1-10)

- *13:5 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. 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. 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. 9 He who has an ear, let him hear. 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.* (NIV)

12:17b And [the dragon] stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (ESV)

- Here we see the "*dragon*", having been foiled in his attempt to destroy the woman and her offspring, standing "*on the sand of the sea*", looking to enlist an earthly agent in his "*war on the rest of [the woman's] offspring*" (Rev. 12:17a).
- More than likely, "*the sand of the sea*" symbolizes the vast population of men under the dragon's feet, i.e., the masses who are under his dominion.
- As we will soon see, the dragon often uses earthly powers and institutions to persecute the people of God:
  - The "*beast rising out of the sea*" (here in verse 1) becomes his ***political*** agent
  - The "*beast rising out of the [Land]*" (verse 11) will serve as his ***religious*** ally

12:17b And [the dragon] stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (ESV)

- There is almost ***universal agreement*** among commentaries of all stripes that the "*beast rising out of the sea*" is closely identified with ***Rome***, for several reasons:
  - The description of this "*beast*" clearly resembles the ***fourth*** beast of Daniel 7 (which symbolizes Rome):
    - Both have "*ten horns*" (Daniel 7:7; Revelation 13:1)
    - Both are noted for their blasphemies (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:1, 5–6)
    - Both are noted for their persecution of the saints (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7)
  - Later, in chapter 17, John will see a vision of a "*prostitute*" riding on this same "*beast with seven heads and ten horns*" (Rev 17:7).
  - A few verses later Revelation 17:9 tells us that "*the seven heads [of that beast] are seven mountains on which the [prostitute] sits*," which most interpreters understand as an allusion to Rome, the "city on ***seven hills***".

12:17b And [the dragon] stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (ESV)

- There is also ***geographical*** evidence that points to Rome in the fact that the beast is "*rising out of the* ***sea***" – since Rome lay across the Mediterranean "*sea*" from Israel and Asia Minor and would have had to travel by "*sea*" to arrive there.
- Thus, what we are seeing here is that the "*dragon*", having lost his heavenly position and having failed to destroy the Jerusalem church, now begins using the power of ***Rome*** against Christians throughout the empire.
- Futurists (such as Walvoord and Gaebelein) see this "*beast*" as a "***revived*** Roman empire" that will arise at a time yet future to us, thus ***thousands of years*** in John's future.
- But John ***repeatedly*** tells us that the events he is describing or are "*near*" (1:1, 3; 6:9-11; 10:7) and will therefore ***directly affect*** his ***original readers.***
- Therefore, I believe it makes ***more sense*** to understand this "*beast*" as referring to ***first century*** Rome rather than some future "revived" Rome ***thousands*** of years later.

12:17b And [the dragon] stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (ESV)

- Note that John's visions do not always follow a ***strict*** historical sequence.
- For example, Chapter 12 describes the Jerusalem church's escape in connection with the Jewish War of AD 67–70, while chapter 13 returns to the earlier outbreak of Nero's persecution that began in AD 64.
- We see from this example that John sometimes describes future events ***topically*** rather than ***chronologically*** in order to serve his theological purposes.
- In this case, because church experienced persecution from unbelieving Jews ***long before*** Rome began persecuting Christians (Acts 8:1–3), John describes the judgment against Israel ***first*** (in chapter 12) and then later (in chapter 13) he ***broadens*** the picture to include a description of the suffering Christians experience at the hands of Nero and the Romans.
- This was also the pattern followed by ***Old Testament*** prophets who commonly addressed judgments that would come on Israel ***before*** turning to judgments that would come on the surrounding nations.

12:17b And [the dragon] stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (ESV)

- Notice that the beast's "*ten horns and seven heads*" resemble those of the "*dragon*" (Rev. 12:3). This resemblance serves to identify Rome as Satan's visible representative.
- Later, Rev. 17:9–10 will tell us that the "*seven heads*" represent ***both*** Rome's seven "*mountains*" (or hills) ***and*** Rome's first seven "*kings*" (i.e., emperors).
- The "*ten horns*" symbolize the completeness of its political and military strength, while also representing subordinate kings (Rev. 17:12).
- These may be local authorities, or perhaps they are client rulers who supplied auxiliary forces to Rome, including during the Jewish War.
- The "*diadems*" upon "*its horns*" emphasize royal authority exercised through military power.
- The "*blasphemous names*" point especially to imperial claims to deity – emperor worship was well established in Asia Minor, as we saw when we looked at the churches addressed in chapters 2 and 3.

12:17b And [the dragon] stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (ESV)



Pat Marvenko Smith. *Revelation Illustrated: An Artist's View of the Bible's Last Book* (1982)

13:2 *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.* (ESV)

- Here we're told that the beast combines the ***appearance*** of a "*leopard*", the "*feet*" of a "*bear*", and the "*mouth*" of a "*lion*".
- These creatures come from the vision of successive kingdoms in Daniel 7:
  - *The first [beast] was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.* (Dan. 7:4–6).
- John ***reverses*** their order and combines them into a single creature, presenting Rome as the fourth kingdom that gathers together all the threatening characteristics of its predecessors.
- The "*leopard*" suggests an effective and dangerous predator, the "*bear*" possesses powerful "*feet*", and the "*lion*" has a terrifying "*mouth*".

13:2 *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.* (ESV)

- This imagery also suits Nero personally.
- The beast represents ***both*** the ***empire*** and the ***emperor*** in whom its authority is embodied.
- Nero's cruelty, murders, and savage persecution made the designation "*beast*" particularly appropriate.
- He eventually directed his savage persecution and imperial cruelty against ***Christians***.
- These animals also evoke the image of the Roman arenas, where condemned Christians could become victims of ferocious beasts.
- Such imagery would have carried a disturbing force for believers facing imperial hostility.
- Paul's statement that he had been rescued from the "*lion's mouth*" fits this setting of danger under Roman authority (2 Tim. 4:17).
- Although Paul's citizenship protected him from certain punishments, it did not remove the threat of execution.

13:2 *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.* (ESV)

- The dragon gives the beast his "*power and his throne and great authority*".
- These terms describe the military force and political dominion that by which Rome imposed its rule.
- From this we see that Satan often employs the machinery of government to accomplish his purposes against the church.
- The empire's impressive public appearance conceals its service to a spiritual enemy.
- Contemporary observers regularly described Rome's dominion in ***universal*** terms – as we will see in the next verse where we're told that "*the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast*".
- Its influence extended across the inhabited world known to the biblical writers.

13:3 *One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.* (ESV)

- Here we see the beast receives a ***fatal wound***, followed by an ***amazing recovery***.
- The "*mortal wound*" to "*one of its heads*" is fitting description of what happened to the empire ("*the beast*") as a result of the death of Nero.
- His death in June AD 68 ended the Julio-Claudian dynasty and plunged Rome into a struggle for survival.
- The next three emperors, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, followed in rapid succession, while civil war, provincial unrest, and foreign threats shook imperial authority.
- Rome appeared to be collapsing.
- The "*mortal wound was healed*" – this pictures the surprising resurgence of the dying empire as a result of Vespasian's coming to power.
- Nero ***himself*** did not come back to life, but the imperial power of ***Rome*** ("*the beast*") recovered from the disaster associated with his death.
- "*the whole earth [the imperial world] marveled as they followed the beast*" – Rome's recovery produced astonishment and renewed submission. The beast's resilience strengthened its prestige.

13:3 *One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.* (ESV)

- What we see here is the beast deliberately ***imitating*** the Lamb.
- The beast is described as having "*a mortal wound*" (or having "*been slain*" - NASB) – language used of ***Christ's*** appearance in Revelation 5:6 – "*a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain*".
- Its recovery resembles a resurrection, and the renewed worship it receives parallels the worship offered to the victorious Lamb.
- Thus, the empire presents a counterfeit version of salvation through death and restored life.

13:4 *And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"* (ESV)

- Here we see the imperial world responds with worship.
- Worship of "*the beast*" is, in effect, worship of "*the dragon*" who supplies the beast's authority.
- Idolatry ultimately serves demonic powers, even when those doing the worship do not recognize that connection (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; 1 Cor. 10:20).
- "*Who is like the beast?*" imitates language often used of God (Ex 15:11; Ps 35:10; 71:19).
- Here the empire receives divine praise because of its seemingly unconquerable strength.
- "*who can fight against it?*" also shows the hopelessness of Israel's military rebellion against Rome.
- But we know that Rome's invincibility is ***temporary***.
- The ***Lamb*** can defeat the beast and its allied kings because he is Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17:14).

13:5 *And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.* (ESV)

- The beast's arrogant mouth brings to mind Daniel's little horn, which speaks great things against God (Dan. 7:8, 20, 25).
- The Roman emperors and their claims to deity constituted ***blasphemy***: a human ruler accepting the honor that ***rightfully*** belongs to his Creator.
- But notice: the expressions "*was given*" and "*was allowed*" point to the fact that Satan can only act within God's sovereign permission.
- God establishes and removes kings (Dan. 2:21).
- Nero's authority is neither inherent nor unlimited.
- The "*forty-two months*" measure the duration of his persecution which took place from about November AD 64 to June AD 68.
- This is a defined historical ***limit*** intended to ***encourage*** suffering Christians.
- Their tormentor will ***not*** continue ***indefinitely***.
- The period resembles the "*forty-two months*" (3 ½ years) mentioned elsewhere in Revelation, but equal duration does not necessarily mean identical dates.
- Revelation 11:2 concerns the Jewish War; ***this*** passage concerns Nero's assault on Christians. Both demonstrate God's control over the duration of suffering.

13:6 *It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.* (ESV)

- The beast blasphemes God's "*name*" and his "*his dwelling*", identified here as "*those who dwell in heaven*".
- The "*dwelling*" reminds us of God's presence with Israel in the wilderness, where he lived among and protected his covenant people (Exod. 29:45–46; Lev. 26:11–12).
- God's ***heavenly*** dwelling now embraces his people who are united with him.
- Their heavenly citizenship distinguishes them from the unbelieving "*land-dwellers*" in Jerusalem.
- Christians on earth belong to the same community as saints already in heaven (Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1).
- Consequently, persecution of earthly believers is an attack on the heavenly community and its God.
- The beast's blasphemy includes accusations and hostile actions against those bearing God's name (Rev. 3:12; 14:1).
- Here we see heaven remains attentive to their suffering and hears their prayers (Rev. 5:8; 6:9–11).

13:7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, 8 and all who dwell on earth [i.e. in the Land] will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. (ESV)

- The beast receives permission "*to make war on the saints and to conquer them*", fulfilling the Christian persecution foretold by Daniel (Dan. 7:21, 25).
- These saints are the woman's remaining "*offspring*", against whom the dragon has declared "*war*" (Rev. 12:17).
- Nero's persecution brought imprisonment, torture, and death to these believers.
- Yet his conquest is temporary and physical.
- Those killed remain the true spiritual conquerors, possessing promises that extend ***beyond*** death: life in God's "*paradise*", deliverance from the "*second death*", and a share in Christ's reign (Rev. 2:7, 11; 3:21).
- "*authority… over every tribe and people and language and nation*" describes Rome's extensive imperial dominion.
- It ***imitates*** Christ's worldwide rule but lacks its ***permanence***.
- It is ***God*** who determines the beast's opportunities and boundaries (John 19:11; Dan. 4:17).

13:7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, 8 and all who dwell on earth [i.e. in the Land] will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. (ESV)

- We see here that the worshippers include the religious, but unbelieving inhabitants of Israel: those who "*dwell in the Land*."
- Their allegiance to Caesar prepares us for the account that will be given of the "*beast rising out of the Land*" (Rev 13:11).
- The Jewish leader's declaration during Christ's earthly ministry, "*We have no king but Caesar*" exposes their rejection of Christ (John 19:15).
- Their names are absent from the "*the book of life of the Lamb*".
- "*written before the foundation of the world*" emphasizes the ***eternal security*** of those belonging to Christ.
- The reference to the "*Lamb who was slain*" sharpens the irony.
- Jerusalem's leaders sought Jesus' death to protect their nation from Rome (John 11:47–50).
- Instead, his death accomplished God's saving purpose, gathering his scattered children into one people (John 11:51–52).

13:9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear: 10 If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints. (ESV)

- The call for those who have an "*ear*" to "*hear*" addresses the threatened churches directly, echoing the messages given earlier to the seven churches (Rev. 2:7; 3:22).
- They must understand their situation spiritually and obey despite ***disappointing outward appearances***.
- This closing oracle draws upon Jeremiah 15:2.
- Believers must accept "*captivity*" (i.e. imprisonment) when God ordains it, and even being "*slain*" with the "*sword*" (i.e. martyrdom) if it comes to that.
- These things are sovereignly determined by God who, at times, in order to serve his sovereign purposes, allows, ***for a limited duration***, the "*beast*" of Satanically controlled government to exercise this kind of evil and unjust authority.
- John summarizes by telling his readers (including us!) that these kinds of ***unpleasant and unwanted circumstances*** are a "*call*" for "*endurance*" and "*faith*" on our part.

Class Discussion Time

- We know from Romans 13 (and other passages) that "*there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God*" (Rom 13:1) and that the governing authority "*is the **servant** of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.*" (Rom 13:4).
- And yet we saw today that at times and for his sovereign purposes God allows Satan to employ the machinery of government to accomplish his (Satan's) purposes against the church who (presumably) are ***not*** "wrongdoers".
- How do we fit these two ideas together?

Class Discussion Time

- The point of Romans 13 is that, as long as a government is doing what God established it to do (ideally), we as Christians should have nothing to fear from that government as long as we are not acting as "*wrongdoers*".
- But a government that God allows Satan to employ for evil purposes will often go ***beyond*** this ideal role for which God established governing authorities, acting as "wrongdoers" themselves, and insisting that we comply with their evil directives.
- As Christians, what is our responsibility such a case? (see Acts 5:29)

Class Discussion Time

- In the United States, who is the ultimate governing authority (humanly speaking).
- Hint: what are the first three words of the Constitution of the United States?
- How do we go about exercising that authority?
- Do you think we will be held accountable for how we exercised that authority?