

BACK TO THE TRIBULATION PART 2

Scripture Reference: Revelation 13:1 – 13:18

Last session we went back to the time period of the seven seals, also known as the Tribulation. We looked at John’s vision and what the symbols of his vision represented.

QUESTION?	From last session, can you recall the symbols and to whom they refer?

In this session we will see John as he reveals a few more symbols in this continued revelation of tribulation events. Read **Revelation 13:1-10**.

From last session, when – in terms of the Tribulation – did the events of **Revelation 12** end? _____

THE FIRST BEAST

As we ended **Revelation 12** last session, we saw that Satan was cast to the earth bringing his great wrath with him. We established last session this takes place at the midpoint of the Tribulation (3 ½ years into it). His pursuit will be the people of God – both Israel and the Church (referred to as “*the rest of her offspring*”).

In **Revelation 13**, what is the first symbol we encounter? _____

Here we meet the first “*beast*”. In order to ascertain the identity of this beast, let’s break down his description.

- 1) *Rising up out of the sea...* The sea most likely represents “the depths” and could be a reference to the abyss or pit from which, as we have seen, come many powerful and supernatural beings – such as Apollyon – and to which Satan and his demons will be bound later.
- 2) *Having seven heads and ten horns...* As we have already seen in past sessions, this is indicative of the beast empire and Antichrist. The seven heads represent the seven beast empires of history (see Session 4) and the

ten horns refer to the ten united kingdoms that comprise the 8th and final Beast Empire (See Session 5).

- 3) *And on his horns ten crowns...* Again, this is a reference to the ten “kings” showing they rule over a nation and become united (for a short time) under Antichrist.
- 4) *And on his heads a blasphemous name...* Everything about Antichrist will be blasphemous as he attempts to convince the world that he is God.
- 5) *The beast... was like a leopard.* If you remember back to Session 4, we looked at **Daniel 7** who revealed four of the beast empires symbolically. Read **Daniel 7:6**. Daniel referred to Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire which carried the logo of a leopard on all his banners. Here, John also sees the leopard reminiscent of Alexander the Great.
- 6) *His feet were like the feet of a bear...* Read **Daniel 7:5**. Daniel saw the bear as the Medo-Persian beast empire. The two feet most likely remembering the two nations (Medo and Persia) that made up this empire. The bear was the emblem for the Medo-Persian empire.
- 7) *His mouth like the mouth of a lion...* The lion in **Daniel 7:4** represented the Babylonian empire which served as their insignia.

The point in this vision referring back to Daniel’s is that the Antichrist and the eighth beast empire is the consummation and conglomeration of the previous beast empires, especially seeing that these three empires, along with Rome, were all of a Japhetic lineage (in Session 5 we established that Antichrist and the 8th beast empire will also be Japhetic.)

- 8) *The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority...* This “beast” will get his power, throne (thus he’ll rule), and authority from Satan himself.

By now we are pretty confident that the identity of this first “beast” is none other than the Antichrist himself. As we saw last session, he receives his ultimate power and authority from Satan when Satan is cast upon the earth at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

But there are some more interesting facts and clues here about the Antichrist.

- 1) *And I saw one of his heads, as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed...* So, one of his seven heads was mortally wounded. Remember that the seven heads refers back to the seven previous beast empires’ rulers. One of these rulers’ is “healed” or even resurrected. We’re not sure exactly what will happen. The consensus seems to be that one of the previous beast empire rulers who was killed by a mortal wound in the head will come back

to life at this point in the Tribulation, which explains the next statement of John better.

- 2) *And all the world marveled and followed the beast...* What would cause people to follow someone more than a resurrection? Isn't that the primary event that moves us to follow Christ? Regardless of this interpretation, millions will follow the Antichrist at this point because of his supernatural power. According to **verse 4** they all worship Satan and the beast.

- 3) *And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies...* Again, another incident where Antichrist is referred to as blasphemous as he sets himself up to be worshipped.

- 4) *And he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.* How long in terms of years is "42 months?" _____

QUESTION?	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">According to Rev. 13:6-8, what will be the dual ambition of the Antichrist?</p>
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Now read **Revelation 13:10**. What is the meaning of this verse for those who are pursued by the Antichrist? _____

THE SECOND BEAST

Let's read **Revelation 13:11-18**. In this passage we meet another symbol of John's vision – the beast that rises up from the earth. As we did with the first beast, let's break some things down so we may realize the identity of this second beast.

- 1) *... and he had two horns...* - Several ideas may be inferred here by the "two horns." One is that this beast is much weaker than the first in that this one has two horns whereas the first beast from the sea (Antichrist) has ten horns. So this beast will be weaker. Another (and admittedly a stretch) is that these "two horns" refers also back to the same vision Daniel saw in **Daniel 8** where Daniel sees a ram with "two horns." Read **Daniel 8:20**. Who did this ram with two horns represent? _____

Who is this today? _____

Again, this is an admitted stretch, but maybe accurate that the two horns is a marker to the fact that this beast is Persian or, in our terms today, Iranian.

- 2) *... like a lamb and spoke like a dragon...* - This phrase reveals the deception in this beast. He will appear like a lamb – innocent, pure, gentle, etc. But when he speaks, his words are from Satan the dragon. People will think him to be holy and true but he, in reality, is serving the cause of Satan.

- 3) *He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence.* – This second beast will exercise the same authority as the Antichrist “in his presence.” Many understand this to mean that only when this second beast is in the presence of the Antichrist can he exercise the authority and power of the Antichrist.

- 4) *... and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.* – This passage reveals the role of this second beast. He is to be the prophet for the Antichrist. Just as John the Baptist announced the coming of the Lord Jesus and publicly affirmed Him, so will this false prophet publicly point towards the worship of the Antichrist as God. Also, interestingly, there is a reference to the fact that the Antichrist’s wound is already healed at this time. Therefore, the rise of the false prophet and the worship of the Antichrist follows the events we discussed last session from **Revelation 12** when Satan is hurled to the earth and the Antichrist makes his claim as God.

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QUESTION?	According to what we’ve discussed so far, who are the two beasts?

So we have established that the first beast is the Antichrist and the second beast is the false prophet. But now, John sees more into this time period and various events and situations which will take place.

QUESTION?	In verses 13 – 17, what are all the powers and influences of the False Prophet?

We see that the false prophet will do and influence the following:

- Performs great signs and wonders to include fire from heaven.
- To deceive many in believing in the Antichrist.
- Influence people to make an image of the beast and worship it.
- He will be able to make the image of the beast breathe and speak and kill those who won't worship the image.
- He will cause many to receive the mark of the beast on either forehead or right hand which will allow them to buy and sell goods.

The Number of the Beast

According to **Revelation 13:18**, what is the number of the beast? _____

There is a great deal of speculation as to what this number means. Here are some possibilities:

- 1) "7" is the number of perfection and often used to refer to the fullness of God (**Revelation 1:4**). Therefore, "6" is often referred to as the number of man in that it falls short of God's "7". The three-fold iteration of the number "6" stresses the total humanity of the Antichrist. When it is all said and done, the Antichrist will be revealed as merely human and not God.
- 2) In many languages, not including English, letters are assigned a numerical value, especially in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Thus there are many who speculate that the letters of the Antichrist's name will numerically equal "666."
- 3) A third understanding of the number is that this number is actually the mark of the beast. There is no indication in the text here that the number and the mark are one in the same, but this third view holds that the way believers will know the mark of the beast is that it will be the number of the beast.

To recap, in the last two sessions we've gone back to the tribulation period during the opening of the seals (**Revelation 6-8**). Chapters 12 and 13 add more details into the events that will take place in this dreadful period. Chapter 12 revealed the cosmic conflict between the archangel Michael with his heavenly host against Satan and his demons. The result is Satan is hurled to the earth, forever banished from heaven and he is filled with great wrath. We saw this coincides with the time when the Antichrist will be ultimately revealed as he exalts himself as God. This all takes place at the midpoint of the tribulation. In Chapter 13, we saw today that along with the Antichrist (the first beast) a false prophet will arise and influence most of the world to worship the Antichrist through his signs and miracles and with the images of the beast. The final condition of Chapter 13 is that the mark of the beast will be required on everyone's forehead or right hand in order for them to purchase or sell anything – especially food.