

Day 251, Revelation 13

by David Servant

David Servant explores the symbolism and implications of the first and second beasts in Revelation 13, emphasizing the dangers of allegiance to the antichrist and the false prophet.

Scripture: Daniel 7:1, Matthew 24:24, Revelation 13:2-17

Topics: "End Times", "Antichrist"

Description

David Servant delves into the Book of Revelation, explaining the symbolism behind the first beast introduced to John, representing the antichrist who will rise to power through a ten-nation confederacy, with characteristics resembling those of Satan. He also discusses the second beast, known as the false prophet, who will lead a new religion of beast worshippers and deceive many with miraculous signs. The false prophet will compel people to worship an image of the first beast, possibly through advanced technology like interactive television, and enforce a mark on people's hands or foreheads as a symbol of allegiance to the beast, restricting their ability to buy or sell.

Transcript

A few chapters from now, we'll read an angel's explanation to John of what this first beast, to whom we are introduced today, represents. His seven heads represent seven mountains and seven kings (17:9-10), and his ten horns also represent ten kings "who give their power and authority to the beast" (17:12-13). John is also told that the beast himself is an eighth king and is "one of the seven" (17:11). Although this is not as clear as we might desire, it is clear enough for us to be certain that the first beast is no less than the antichrist--who will one day captivate and dominate the world---through his ten-nation confederacy. Note that he has the same number of heads (seven) and horns (ten) as the dragon (Satan) whom we met in the previous chapter (12:3). Indeed, it is Satan who gives the beast his "power and his throne and great authority" (13:2).

John also notes that the first beast has characteristics of a leopard, bear and lion. The prophet Daniel also had a vision in which he saw four beasts come out of the sea, the first three of which successively looked like a lion, bear and leopard. The fourth beast Daniel saw also had ten horns, and he was told that each one represented a king who would come under the domination of the future antichrist (Dan. 7:1-28).

John saw one of the heads of the first beast receive a fatal wound that was then healed, causing the world to be amazed and worship both Satan and the beast (13:3-4). The antichrist may well use his miraculous resurrection to validate his messiahship. He will truly be a false messiah, an impostor of Christ.

John also describes the beast as "speaking arrogant words and blasphemies" (13:5) just as did the "little horn" in Daniel's vision which I previously mentioned, a horn which clearly represented the antichrist (Dan. 7:8, 19-26). Also, the little horn in Daniel's vision "makes war with the saints" (Dan. 7:21) just as does John's first beast (13:7). John wrote that he will have authority to act for forty-two months---exactly three-and-a-half years (13:5), a number with which you should be quite familiar by now.

The second beast to whom we are introduced today is called "the false prophet" in 16:13 and 19:20. Aided by miraculous signs, he will be the leader of the new religion of beast worshippers. Jesus, of course, foretold that "false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect" (Matt. 24:24).

That false prophet will tell "those who dwell on the earth to make an image of the [first] beast" (13:14), which he will somehow animate so that it speaks and even kills those that don't worship it. Obviously, some will not worship it. Could John have seen some kind of interactive television? Can you imagine having a TV set that has a tiny camera on it, that when an image of the antichrist is broadcast, it monitors who is and is not bowing before it? I'm writing this right now on a laptop that has a tiny built-in camera, so the scenario I've just described is not so far-fetched!

The false prophet will force everyone to take a mark on their hands or foreheads, without which they will not be able to buy or sell. Some speculate that the mark will be an implanted microchip that contains individual data, something already being done in both animals and humans. There would be no need for cash and no worry about stolen credit cards, because everyone's financial information would be contained within his implanted chip, and his bank account could be automatically adjusted at each transaction. This interpretation, however, has its opponents, because John said that the mark would be the name or number of the beast, indicating the mark would perhaps only symbolize allegiance to the beast. Whatever it is, that is a mark you don't want to take if you're ever given the opportunity.

Regarding the number 666, many speculate, but I don't have a clue!

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