***The Beast out of the Sea

RV163-01***

Please open your Bibles to a new portion of the Word of God in Revelation 13.

The chronological progression of the divine judgments on tribulation humanity, which are revealed in the Revelation under the symbol of the seals and trumpets, has been interrupted after the sounding of the seventh trumpet. That happened back at Revelation 11:15. Before the judgments, which will result from the blowing of the seventh trumpet, are set loose, the Holy Spirit inserts a large set of parenthesis to give us some further background information on the conditions that exist in the tribulation period. We are currently in that large set of parentheses. It goes on through Revelation 16:8.

At that point, the seven bowls of judgment which come out of the blowing of the seventh trumpet, are then systematically poured forth upon tribulation mankind. These final bowls of judgment will be poured out near the end of the tribulation seven-year period, and they will come in rapid succession like heavy hammer blows that finally completely crush the empire and the power base of the antichrist.

The large parentheses reveals the historical promotion of anti-Semitism by Satan. Israel, as a nation, was destined to produce the Messiah Savior, who in turn would destroy the power of Satan. Satan was unable to prevent the birth of the God-man Jesus Christ, which had been promised by God the Father to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. Satan also was unable to kill Jesus Christ before He gave His life on the cross as the Lamb of God, in payment of death for the sins of mankind.

**The Inheritance of Jesus Christ**

The resurrected Lord Jesus Christ has ascended into heaven to wait for the day when He will be sent back by the Father to the earth, to rule over all nations, with the Jewish people as the primary and leading nation. Satan wishes to avoid this because it means that he who now rules the nations of the world, will lose his power base, and be replaced by Jesus Christ and the Jewish people. In the Bible, this is referred to as the inheritance of Jesus Christ. So, what he is doing now in heaven is sitting at the right hand of God the Father, awaiting to day which only the Father knows, when He'll turn to the Son and say, "Now I want you to go and receive your inheritance, which will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords over all the earth for a 1,000-year earthly reign.

Satan wants to prevent this reign of Jesus Christ in this Millennial Kingdom, so he has sponsored various programs designed to exterminate the Jewish people from off the face of the earth. The strategic plan of Satan (the word "strategic" means the overall plan, in contrast to "tactical," which means the individual action in a battle) is for him to murder every descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob during the last three-and-a-half years of his freedom. The tactical plan will take various forms in order to achieve that strategic end.

Satan wants to make the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ impossible by exterminating all living Jews. You cannot have a Millennial Kingdom on the face of the earth if you do not have Jews who are alive in their natural bodies (not glorified bodies), so that they may enter the Millennial Kingdom as human beings living on this earth, in marriage, having children and a full lifestyle, along with the gentile world.

At the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation period, a war will be fought in heaven between the angels of God and the angels of Satan. This will bring to a climax the angelic conflict of the ages. Michael, leading the angels of God, will defeat Satan and his demons. The defeat of Satan will then result in his permanent expulsion from access to the third heaven, where he now is able to accuse believers of their sins. Satan, at that point, will be earthbound, and he will be in a white-hot rage, because of his humiliation before all of the angelic hosts. He will also be indignant and enraged by the fact that he knows that he only has three-and-a-half years left of freedom before the return of Jesus Christ, which will terminate his reign of power.

**Satan Persecutes the Jews**

Satan turns his rage, therefore, against the Jews once more who are on the earth. And John points out to us that he directs it especially toward those who obey the commandments of God – those who have a respect for the Old Testament Scriptures, which might even be *unsaved* Jews, and certainly he directs it against those who hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ. The persecuted tribulation Jews try to flee from the Satan's agents, but two-thirds of the Jews worldwide will not make it. They will be killed. One-third of the Jews will be preserved by God supernaturally in their natural human bodies. God will protect them, and He will feed them in a wilderness area, perhaps in the refuge of Petra in southern Jordan for that final three-and-a-half year period of the tribulation.

In Revelation 13, the first phrase belongs in chapter 12, as we pointed out last time. "And he stood on the sand of the seashore" is the proper translation. This is a reference to Satan. He has been humiliated. He is now enraged, and he is pictured as standing on the seashore on the earth, planning his final assault against God. The hatred of Satan for God is so intense that it is actually difficult for you and me as Christians to comprehend. You have to be in the presence of a person who is really a God-hater, and listen to what they say, and how they say it, to be able to get some sense of the depth of anger and antagonism that an unbeliever can have toward his Creator.

Satan is the one who inspires this kind of antagonism toward God, and now his hatred has never been greater, and he is determined to express that hatred by blaspheming God, and by leading mankind into the grossest violations of the moral laws of God. There is no filthy quality which will be too vile for Satan to promote in the world in order to show contempt for God, the Creator.

**A Beast**

In Revelation 13, John is introduced to two human personalities that Satan will use to execute his counterattack against God. So, in Revelation 13, we begin reading (after the first phrase): "And I saw a beast." The word "saw" is the Greek word "horao." The word "horao" is the word in the Greek language for seeing something in terms of a panoramic overview. John is an observer here. He is not part of the action now. He is observing, and he is observing as a great drama begins to unfold before his eyes. And he is standing there awed by what he sees. And what he sees is an animal which is here described by the Greek word "therion." "Therion" is a word that refers to a wild beast. It has the connotation of something which is vicious.

In Acts 28:4, this word is used. The background here is that Paul has just been rescued with his shipmates from the shipwreck, and they find themselves on the island of Malta. Paul proceeds to help put wood on the fire that they had built to warm themselves, when out of the fuel, a deadly viper came and attached itself to Paul's hand: "And when and when the natives saw the creature (that is the word 'therion') hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "Undoubtedly, this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live." They all expected Paul to fall over dead because of this deadly creature. So, this word, "therion," connotes something that is very deadly and very vicious. Of course, in this instance, Paul survived. He simply shook it off, and that impressed everybody quite a bit, which now gave him a base for testimony.

The Bible uses this term for both nations and their rulers. It's important for you to remember that, or this chapter will be a little confusing to you. This word "beast" is used to refer to a nation, and is also used to refer to the ruler of that nation, because they sort of coalesce together. The nations of the world, as seen by God, are wild, vicious beasts because they reflect their master Satan. That is why, interestingly enough, nations use wild animals to symbolize themselves. When they want to have a national animal to symbolize the nation, they use a wild animal. God's view of the nations is such. They are vicious, and they are animal-like. I remind you that God views every one of the nations of this world, including ours, as such, in spite of what people think as their glory: the high IQ of their people; their refined culture; their advanced technology; their sophistication; their wealth; and their humanitarianism. All of these things, in which people take great pride, and by which they think they have some great esteem, God says, "You're a bunch of vicious dogs." God calls the unsaved man's righteousness simply filthy rags. And his nation is seen by God for what it really is – a "therion" divine beast.

The word "beast" is used in the Bible, then, on the one hand, for a nation or an empire. It is used also, on the other hand, for the ruler himself. This is very clearly seen, for example, in the great king of France, Louis XIV, who was one of the last of the really true absolute rulers. It was impressive to stand in Louis's bedroom, in the palace at Versailles. As we looked around that magnificent room, there was a symbol of the sun over his bed. You saw it repeatedly because Louis the 14th called himself the sun god. He viewed himself as such an exalted creature that everything revolved around him. And it did, from the time he woke up in the morning, in came the courtiers and the administrators, and they all stood there while he got dressed and went through his morning ablutions and whatnot, and everything throughout the rest of the day revolved around Louis the sun king. Therefore, it was not unexpected for Louis, on one occasion, to say, "I am France," because he was. When you talked about: "What does France think? What do the people of France believe?" You had to say: "What does Louis think? What does Louis believe? Louis is France."

So, you have there an illustration of this biblical principle that this word "beast" refers both to the ruler as well as to the nation, because they coalesce into one entity, so that what can be said of one is true indeed of the other.

**Out of the Sea**

Well, John here sees a beast, and this beast is to be viewed as both an empire and as the ruler of that empire. He sees this beast coming up out of the sea. This is the regular Greek word for "sea:" the "thalassa." Here again, we have to resort to how words are used in the Bible in order to find exactly what the meaning of this is that John sees. There is an empire ruler described as a beast coming up out of the sea. We have a little clue for that in Revelation 17:1: "And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me saying, 'Come here. I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.'" Verse 15: "And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw where the harlot sits are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." This is a great worldwide religious system. A one-church world is described here as the harlot – spiritual adultery, which is characterized by this creature. At the beginning, she will be riding the back of the antichrist in his empire. She will be on him, and therefore, he who rules the nations of the world will himself be ruled by this religious system.

**Ten Horns**

That's the picture you have here. But I point out to you that he identifies the waters here as being peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. So, what we have in Revelation 13:1 is that John sees an empire and its ruler coming up out of a mass of gentile humanity. John sees a political ruler, and the kingdom of that ruler, arise from tribulation humanity. He describes this empire beast as "having ten horns." The Greek word is "keras." This is the word which would be used of the horn on an animal.

**A Horn**

Again, Revelation 17:12 gives us a little clue on how to interpret the concept of a horn: "And the ten horns which you saw (referring to the ten horns on this beast that John sees coming up out of the mass of gentiles humanity) are ten kings who have not received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour," meaning for a short period of time. So, Revelation 17:12 explains to us that the horns on the beast symbolize reigning kings.

**A Diadem (A Crown)**

For that reason, we are also told that each of these horns wears a diadem, or a crown. It is properly translated as "diadem.' It is this Greek word "diadema." That is the Greek word for a crown that an imperial ruler wears. There's another Greek word, "stephanos," which means a victor's crown. Those are the kinds of crowns that Christians get for their Christian service. But this is the crown of a ruling authority such as a political ruler (a king).

So, this kingdom beast that Johns sees is made up of ten political rulers who are united together in some kind of confederacy. In Daniel 7:24, this same beast is referred to. I remind you that we will have to refer back to the book of Daniel, and learn something about Daniel's revelation, because you cannot understand the book of the Revelation without understanding the revelation that Daniel gave. Daniel gave a great many of the clues and keys for interpretation. Daniel 7:24 says, "As for the ten horns out of this kingdom, ten kings will arise. And another will arise after them, and he'll be different from the previous ones, and will subdue three kings.

So, here, way back in Daniel's day, Daniel is given a vision of this same kingdom that John sees coming up out of the mass of humanity, identified under this same arrangement of ten kings united together. But Daniel gives a little more information in saying that along comes some powerful personality, who is attractive, winsome, and impressive, and with great power of some kind (which we find as satanic power), and he is able to bring down three of the horns (three of the kings). When the other ten kings see this, they say, "Who can stand up against the wonderful person of the beast (referring to the antichrist)? And they join him, and he becomes their ruler.

So, the beast comes up out of the mass of humanity. It is an empire that is a combination of ten nations out of the area that the Roman Empire once occupied around the Mediterranean Sea. It is an empire where the beast (the ruler here now – the antichrist) is in charge.

**Seven Mountains**

Furthermore, this beast has a background. It has a history. That is described by these seven heads – the heads of the beasts. It's the Greek word "kephale." "Kephale" is again interpreted for us in Revelation 17:9-10: "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they (the seven mountains) are seven kings." So, here's a double symbolism. He says, "The seven heads stand for seven mountains. You may remember that in the Bible, a kingdom is referred to as a mountain. He says, "These seven heads are seven kingdoms and their rulers." Here again, the kingdom and the ruler are joined together and viewed as one: "There are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and there are seven kings."

Then Revelation 17:10 says, "Five have fallen." Five of these empire-ruler combinations have fallen in the past history: "And one is (at the time that John wrote), and one is not yet come." That "not yet come" one (let me give you a preview) is the antichrist with his revived and restored Roman Empire in the form of these ten kings. When that one comes, he must remain a little while. So, the seven heads represent seven kings and their kingdoms. Five of these kingdoms have passed off the scene of history when John wrote Revelation.

It refers specifically to world kingdoms – kingdoms which were known for their anti-Semitism. That's the context of this passage. The devil is out to finish off the Jew once and for all. So, the Holy Spirit tells us about the kingdom through which the antichrist is going to work. He reminds us that this kingdom is the inheritor of past empires' attitudes toward the Jew. They have been anti-Semitic in themselves.

**Egypt**

Who were these empires in the past that had this attitude toward the Jews, who persecuted and control them? The most prominent one, to begin with, was Egypt. Egypt was the first oppressor of Israel. It held the Jews as slaves for 400 years. Can you imagine that – four centuries to hold a specific group of people as slaves? And they were held there until delivered by Moses through an act of God. That is head number one.

**Assyria**

Head number two is the world empire of Assyria. Assyria was a brutal enemy of the Jews. It was Assyria that invaded the northern kingdom of Israel. It devastated the land, and it took the people into captivity. Assyria really hated the Jewish people. When Assyria was through, it took those ten northern tribes; dissipated them; and, enslaved them. Those people we have never found again. They just evaporated in the mass of humanity.

**Terrorists**

It is the Assyrians who knew how to control people by terror. They were the original terrorists, and they controlled the people they conquered by the worst kinds of terror treatment. There were things that they enjoyed doing to their enemies. They would take an enemy; stretch him out; tie his hands and his feet down; and, then take a very sharp knife and gradually filleting the skin off of him until he was one oozing mass of bleeding pores all over until he died. They enjoyed the screams and the agony.

It was the Assyrians who laid the foundations for the lingering method of execution known as crucifixion. Except they did it by cutting top of a small tree down; sharpening the tip; and, then, with a group of men holding the victim, bringing him down upon that sharpened point, and impaling the victim, so that he writhed in agony until he died. It was not unknown in history for the Assyrians, in their rage against an enemy, to fill a hillside, as far as you could see, with people impaled on these sharp stumps of the trees.

**Babylon**

The third head that is the background of the antichrist's revived Roman Empire is Babylon (Babylonia) under Nebuchadnezzar. Remember that Nebuchadnezzar was the only Arab that ever conquered the Jewish nation. We have had an Arab in recent times. Saddam Hussein called himself Nebuchadnezzar III. He celebrated that he was the modern Nebuchadnezzar, and he was going to do what Nebuchadnezzar had done. Most of the news media didn't tell you this. What Saddam was saying was, "I am going to do what the first Nebuchadnezzar did – conquer the Jewish nation." Nobody has ever done that since. Only Nebuchadnezzar has been able to take the Jews, when they were in freedom as an independent nation, and bring them into a conquered position.

Nebuchadnezzar, as you know, through three separate invasions, finally totally destroyed the temple; the city of Jerusalem; and, the walls, and carried the mass of the people as slaves back into Babylon. And with that, the southern kingdom of Judah was in captivity for a period of 70 years before, by God's grace, they were permitted to return to the land, and to again resume their life there, but nevertheless, under military domination.

**Medo-Persia**

The fourth head is Medo-Persia. It was in the time of the empire of the Medo-Persians that the government agreed on a certain day to exterminate all the Jews in the empire. This was one of Satan's most magnificent efforts, when the Medo-Persian king issued the order that on a certain day, every Jew in the Empire could be killed by any citizen, and you would then be able to take whatever wealth that Jew possessed. This was a horrendous matter. It was instigated by Haman, but God preserved the Jews by bringing Queen Esther on the scene to reveal to her husband, the king, that she herself was a Jewess, and whether he was prepared that she should be killed. The king was enraged, especially when he found that her uncle was one the man who had saved the king's life by bringing intelligence information to the king that he'd overheard of a plot against the king's life. And this man, her uncle, had never been rewarded.

Well, everything rapidly came together, and in the empire of the Medes and the Persians, because they wanted people to know that when they spoke, they meant it, they had a law that you couldn't repeal a law. Therefore, once a law was passed, you couldn't change it. So, the king said, "I'll create another law: All the Jews can fight back. If anybody attacks you, you can attack the person that is threatening your life, and you can benefit by what he possesses. The result was that the Jews were saved. In time, it was the Medo-Persian Empire that permitted the Jews to return to Palestine.

**Greece**

The fifth empire, the fifth had in the past history of the empire of the antichrist is Greece. Alexander the Great conquered Palestine. He imposed Greek culture upon them, including the Greek language. One of the heads of this previous historical series of heads was in existence in John's day. Revelation 17:10 again gives us a clue there: "Seven kings (that is seven previous empire kings), five have fallen (that we've described for you; that is, Egypt; Assyria; Babylonia; Persia; and, Greece), one is."

**The Roman Empire**

That's the one that existed in John's day, which, of course, was the Roman Empire, which had subjugated the Jews militarily. Rome crucified the Jews' Messiah Savior, Jesus Christ. They finally destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. They destroyed the second temple that had been built.

**Worldwide Dispersion of the Jews**

They also dispersed the Jews worldwide. That dispersion by the Roman Empire authorities continued until 1948, when the Jews finally became a nation again. The Roman Empire continues to this day. You should understand that. We're going to have to go back to Daniel in the future shortly, to give you a background so that you'll understand what John is referring to here. But just in brief, Daniel gives us the course of world empires from his day until the Second Coming of Christ. There were only four. Number four was the Roman Empire. That's why we know that no nation on the face of the earth will ever completely bring down the Roman Empire before the end times. We always knew, for example, that the Russians would never become a world empire. Their purpose was to conquer the world, but we knew from Scripture that they could never do that, because Rome was the last world empire of man.

**The Future Roman Empire**

The Roman Empire, therefore, continues to this day, but it's in the form of individual nations into which it has splintered. The seventh head, with its empire ruler, was still future at the time that John wrote, and is indeed still future in our day. Revelation 17:10 refers to that: "The other has not yet come." So, this refers to some form of the Roman Empire in the future, and that form is in Revelation 17:12: "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received the kingdom, but they received authority as kings with the beast for one hour." It is a confederacy of ten nations, which are symbolized by these ten horns, which form a nation in the tribulation era, headed up by the antichrist. It is a confederacy of ten nations, which in their historical background are the inheritors of all the previous nation empires that have come before them.

This seventh empire comes into being in the tribulation as the result of the conquest of the antichrist, as Daniel 7:8 points out. This antichrist is referred to by one of the several titles that we find of him in Scripture. There he is called the little horn. Daniel 7:8: "While I was contemplating the horns (the same that John was viewing), behold another horn." Daniel has seen this beast with seven horns. He has found that these are seven kings who are going to be ruling together. Suddenly, he sees a little horn come on the scene among them: "Three of the big horns are pulled out by the roots before it. Behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts." So, in Daniel's time, we were told that the eyes of this antichrist ruler (which represents knowledge and understanding) indicate that he is going to be a magnificent person of great capacity. And he has a mouth that is going to utter great boasts. He's going to be very arrogant; he's going to be very vile; and, he's going to be very blasphemous.

So, the seventh head is a form that is to come in the future. That is what John is seeing coming out of the sea of humanity. He is seeing this beast, which is the ten-nation confederacy form of the Roman Empire. It is coming into being as under the direction of the so-called little horn. The antichrist himself is the kingdom which he rules with absolute authority and satanic power. So, he is actually called the eighth form of world empires.

Revelation 17:11 refers to him, in fact, so distinctly that he is considered another form: "And the beast which was (the Roman Empire which was), and is not (for a while, it was not in its powerful condition), is himself an eighth, and is one of the seven. He goes to destruction." So, when the antichrist comes on the scene, he is so distinctive that he is even viewed as another form of the empire.

So, these seven heads (or world empires) cover the period of human history from the Tower of Babel to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation. This is what the Bible refers to in 21:24 as the times of the gentiles. These seven heads, with the antichrist himself as a special eighth head with his empire, represent gentile control over the Jewish people from the time of the Tower of Babel to the Second Coming of Christ.

**Words of Blasphemy**

Now John tells us that on the heads of these seven kings, there are the words of blasphemy. This the Greek word "blasphemia." The word "blasphemia" in the Greek language refers to speech which is contemptuous of God, or of sacred things. In Daniel 11:36, the blasphemous character of the antichrist has been revealed to Daniel: "Then the king will do as he pleases." This is referring to this antichrist beast: "He will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and will speak monstrous things against the God of Gods (against the true God). And He will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done." "Monstrous things" is referring to things that are horrendous to conceive. They are specific acts of blasphemy.

Blasphemy include making oneself equal to God, or in fact claiming to be God. That, especially among the Jews was the most blasphemous thing that you could do – to claim to be deity. This is exactly what the antichrist is going to do, because you remember that he hates the Jew. He is motivated by Satan. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 tells us about the antichrist: "Who opposes and exalts himself above every so called god or object of worship, so that he takes a seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." What the antichrist does there is an act of the grossest kind of blasphemy – claiming to be deity.

The Jews understood that, and because they didn't believe that Jesus was God, they accused Him of blasphemy. Please notice in Matthew 26:63-66: "But Jesus kept silent, and the high priest said to Him." Here Jesus is being interrogated before He is taken to Pontius Pilate: "I adjure you by the living God that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God." They are trying to get a case against Jesus Christ that they can take to the Roman authorities as justification for executing Him.

So, finally, the high priest becomes impatient. He asks Jesus outright, "Are you God?" If he was the Christ Messiah promised in the Old Testament, He had to be God. The "Son of God" is a technical term for deity. Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself. Nevertheless, I tell you, hereafter, you shall see the Son of Man." Now just in passing, I want to tell you that the Son of Man is used in the book of Daniel in the description of the coming Messiah Savior, and it is also a technical term. When somebody called himself Son of Man, he wasn't just saying that he was human. That did imply humanity, but "Son of Man," as a term, implied that: "I am the Messiah Savior God." So, even "Son of Man" implied deity.

So, Jesus was giving them a double-whammy. He said, "Yes, you've called Me the Son of God (deity), and you're right. Furthermore, I'm telling you, I'm the Son of Man. I am also a human. That's where you're making the mistake of thinking that I am not God. I am a God-man. You're going to see Me, the Son of Man (deity) sitting at the right hand of power (that is, in heaven, the right hand of God the Father), and coming in the clouds of heaven." Jesus made no pretense, no matter what the liberals tell you, about claiming that He was God. He made no pretense about that. He outright said, "I am God." Here is one of the great passages on that subject.

"Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, 'He has blasphemed. What further need do we have a witnesses? Behold, you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.'" Now, indeed, under the Mosaic Law, if you blasphemed God, if you said, "I am God," you were put to death. If you cursed God, you were put to death. If you said foul things about God, that's blasphemy, and you were put to death. So, they had to have the right punishment, but they had the wrong accusation.

Furthermore, Jesus was accused of blasphemy when He indirectly claimed to have the powers of deity, such as to be able to forgive sins. In Mark 2:5, the paralytic man is brought to Jesus. They bring him in the door. He's lying there: "Jesus, seeing their faith." This is the faith of these friends. They've let this man down through the roof, right in front of Jesus, because they couldn't come through the door. Jesus says to the paralytic, "'My son, your sins are forgiven.' But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts (in their minds): "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

So, blasphemy is not only to claim to be God, but it is also an act of claiming to have the powers of God – here, to forgive sins, which only God can do. But because Jesus knew what they were thinking, he asked them, "What is easier? What's the easier thing for Me to do: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven (and you can't see whether they are or not); or, for Me to take this man whom you know is paralyzed and cannot walk, and for Me to heal him?" And of course, the answer was, "Now if you can heal this man, nobody can deny that. We can see that, and we know that only God could do that."

So, that's why Jesus, in verse 11, says, "'And I say to you: rise; take up your pallet; and, go home.' And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet, and went out in the sight of all, so that they were all amazed, and were glorifying God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'" And indeed they had not. Here was a genuine demonstration of divine power.

So, in the case of Jesus, they accused Him of blasphemy because if human beings did the things that He did, it would have been blasphemy. But in his case, He was truly God, so it was not blasphemy. Blasphemy against God is always the response of those who are in rebellion against His authority. When you really hate God, then you blaspheme God, and then you say vile things about God.

Notice the attitude of these who are in rebellion against God during the tribulation, when the bowls of judgment of wrath are being poured out upon them in Revelation 16:8-11: "And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with fierce heat, and they blasphemed the name of God, who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent, so as to give Him the glory." The implication here is that they now know that God is in heaven. The New Agers on this earth will be in such a rage. They know that it is the power of God that is doing this. What do they do? They blaspheme God. What do they say?

Well, I wouldn't want to suggest to you what they're going to say, but they are going to be vile and filthy things – what they call God, and what they say to God. The same for the fifth bowl: "And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast (the antichrist), and upon his kingdom. It became darkened. They gnawed their tongues because of pain. And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and they did not repent of their deeds." Those who are in rebellion against God's authority and will not repent, find it very easy to blaspheme God.

If you've never had somebody utter blasphemy to you, or say something that was blasphemous, you can't really enter into the cold chill that that puts through you. I remember one time at Baylor University a roommate coming and saying, "Have I got a joke to tell you! And he told me a joke in a few sentences, and it was the most blasphemous statement one could imagine against God the Holy Spirit. I was absolutely shocked and chilled in disbelief that any human being would say something like that. And I've often wondered where that man is now.

In New Testament times, when Jesus walked this earth, if anybody listened to Him, and saw His miracles, saw Him working with power, and they said, "You're doing that through the power of the devil," that was such a blasphemous insult to God the Holy Spirit, who was working through the God-man Jesus, that the Lord said you will never be forgiven that sin. That's the unforgivable sin. That is the one thing that you will never be forgiven – to blaspheme against God the Holy Spirit. Fortunately, you cannot commit that sin today, because Jesus is not here for us to see His mighty works, so that we can be attributing those to Satan. But blasphemy God is deeply set in the human heart when it is in rebellion against God's authority. Blasphemy expresses a deep-seated hatred for the Holy Creator God.

Furthermore, John says in Revelation 13:1, that as he looked more closely at these heads representing empire rulers, that on their heads were inscribed words of blasphemy. These names will be filthy, vile, degrading, and contemptuous of God beyond imagination. The seven empire heads of history, in their anti-Semitism, indeed expressed some form of blasphemy against Israel's God. It was not unusual for the rulers of these empires to claim deity for themselves – the utmost expression of blasphemy. And they had titles that they would place upon themselves. In the time of the Roman emperors, they took to themselves the title "Lord," and you had to say, "Lord Emperor." And of course, they understood that the word "Lord" meant "deity." That's why, when the Christians came on the scene, they absolutely refused to call the emperor "Lord," because to call him "Lord" was to be blasphemous – to call him God.

These seven empires throughout the centuries have repeatedly had men who called themselves gods, and who demanded to be worshiped as God. That was the problem for the early Christians. In the Roman Empire, they would not worship the emperor. They would not perform a sacrifice to the genius of the emperor, by which they meant his deity.

Revelation 17:3 refers to the blasphemous beast out of the sea, which is the revived Roman Empire of the tribulation in its ten-nation form: "And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast." That is the antichrist. He is scarlet because he is empowered and closely associated with Satan, the murder – the bloody-handed Satan: "This scarlet beast was full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns." You can still see the connection – seven heads (seven previous empires) influencing this revived state of the Roman Empire, and under its form of seven kings united together in a confederacy.

Revelation 12:3 actually connects for us Satan (the dragon) with the restored form of the Roman Empire: "And another sign appeared in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon (this murderous creature, Satan), having seven heads and ten horns. And on his head were seven diadems." So, here Satan is closely tied with this beast that John sees coming out of the sea, the restored Roman Empire of the antichrist in the tribulation period, because Satan is going to control him in the final stage in human history.

**Other Names of the Antichrist**

In closing, this beast from the sea has several other names. I want to mention those to you so that you'll be somewhat acquainted with these names, so that you know that it is talking about a marvelous personality who is probably alive today, ready to take his place on the scene of human history, as the dominant personality over a conglomerate of ten powerful European nations, that in time will dominate the whole world, and he is the leader of them all. In Daniel 7:8, he is called the little horn. In Daniel 8:23, he is called the king of fierce countenance. In Daniel 9:26, he is called the prince that shall come. In Daniel 11:21, he is called the vile person. In Daniel 11:36, he is called the willful king. In John 5:43, he is called the one that shall come in his own name. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, he is called the man of sin. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, he is called the son of perdition. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8, he is called the lawless one. In Revelation 13:1, we have seen him called the beast, as he also is in Revelation 13:18.

Finally, in 1 John 2:18 (and I want to read that one) is the one by which most of us refer to this creature – the antichrist: "Children, it is the last hour. And just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now, many antichrist have arisen. From this we know that it is the last hour." John here refers to a supreme creature that he called the antichrist which is to come at the end times. But he says, "There are going to be many little imitation antichrist types who will come on the scene of human history, like Hitler, and Mussolini, and others before them. They will come periodically until the main event begins.

So, this is where we get the word "antichrist." But I have given you ten other titles by which this man is described in Scripture.

In this chapter, John is going to be shown what the final years of mankind will be like, and what the objectives will be of this magnificent person that God has prepared for this horrible hour, who will rule the world and bring it down to its final destruction. So, the scene will be set for the glorious kingdom of the Son of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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