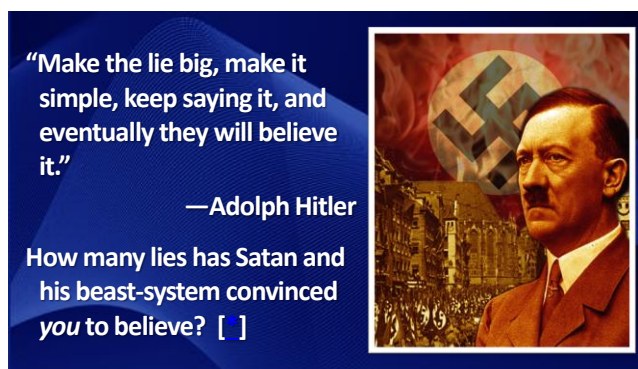


**Cosmic Conflict**  
**The First Beast (Revelation 13:1–10)**  
**By Pastor Jeff Alexander (11/15/2015)**

**Introduction**

1. Revelation 13 addresses the *means* that the dragon (Satan) uses to wage war against God and His saints: the terrible beast from the sea, the lamb-like beast from the earth, and great Babylonian whore (17). The question is, who do these figures represent?
  - a. Are they different entities or different aspects of the same entity?
  - b. Are these entities individuals or corporations or both?
2. Popular prophecy teachers hold that the first beast is the antichrist, an incarnation of Satan in human form, who rules the world during the “Tribulation,” the final seven years before Jesus returns.
  - a. The beast is antichrist, but is it *the* antichrist, since the term does not appear in Revelation?
  - b. Also, where in Revelation are we limited to the end of the world for the beasts’ arrival?
3. False teaching is very dangerous to people of God.
  - a. Eve was deceived in the Garden (Gen. 3:13).
  - b. Moses warned the people: “*Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them*” (Deut. 11:16).
  - c. Paul warned, “*But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ*” (2 Cor. 11:3).
4. John’s purpose for writing Revelation is to warn and inform the saints to be—
  - a. Patient: “*you have kept my word about patient endurance*” (3:10).
  - b. Vigilant: “*Blessed is the one who stays awake [watches], keeping his garments on*” (16:15).
  - c. Discerning: To avoid “*the deceiver of the whole world*” (12:9).



**I. His Entrance**

1. The monster rises out of the sea.
  - a. The sands of the seashore speak of the vast innumerable multitude (Gen. 22:17; Rev. 20:8).
  - b. The sea speaks of a chaotic region from which threat and rebellion arise—the abyss (Luke 8:31; Rev. 11:7).

2. The beast is the personification of the dragon.
  - a. John sees a close mirror image of the dragon since both have seven heads, ten horns, and diadems.
  - b) The description is a reworking of Daniel 7:1-7.
    - 1) Gentile kingdoms holding sway over the Israel of God: Neo-Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.
    - 2) John's beast, however, has seven heads.
    - 3) As does John's, so Daniel's fourth beast has 10 horns or kings.
  - c. The beast acts for 42 months, symbolizing the whole period from Christ's resurrection to His return, the time that the church is persecuted but protected, conquered but not destroyed (v. 5).
  - d. The beast also imitates the Lamb, having a fatal head-wound that is healed (the same language used of the Lamb in 5:6 and 2:8). His counterfeit resurrection evokes amazement and worship.
3. The dragon gives the beast authority (v. 4).
  - a. This gift elicits wonder and worship from the whole earth for both Satan and His beast-minion (v. 4).
  - b. This gift enables the beast to speak prideful and blasphemous words against God and heaven (v. 5).
  - c. This gift enables the beast to make war on the saints and to conquer them (v. 6).
  - d. This gift enables the beast to have power to rule over *all* the earth—over “*every tribe and people and language and nation*” (v. 7).

## II. His Significance

1. Scripture clearly informs us that no power exists but at God's permission—“*the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will*” (Dan. 4:25).
  - a. Satan and his minions are on God's leash at all times, as we learn from Job 1, 2.
  - b. No human government exists but at His bidding (Dan. 4:17).
  - c. The kingdoms of the world are ruled by fallen angels who will be judged for their management (Psa. 82).
2. God's sovereignty and the response of the earth-dwellers (v. 8; Job 12:16)
  - a. The deceived worship both dragon and beast because they are awed by power and miracle, which they believe are from God.
  - b. John informs us that the worshipers are those who will never be saved and whose names are not in the Book of Life.

## III. Details

1. Are we to be looking for a man who will come to power, be assassinated, be miraculously healed, and then acquire worldwide worship as a false Christ?
  - a. Does the text not demand this? Maybe, maybe not (2 Thess. 2:3–8).

b. What, then, would the symbolism imply? It is very likely that John used his “current events” to demonstrate the cycle of human government in contrast to God’s everlasting kingdom.

2. How does this beast-kingdom translate in our day?

a. Given that the beast is symbolic of all earthly rule since the days of Rome, there must be a modern counterpart because Christ has not yet returned.

b. Here is a possible scenario, especially in the wake of the Islamic terrorist attacks in Paris this week. As with the World Trade Center attack on 9/11 in 2001, the nation is vulnerable to another terrorist attack at any time. A large enough attack could cripple our fragile economic and social structure, sending the nation into chaos. Marshal law could be declared and a UN controlled government implemented to restore order. An antichrist figure could easily emerge.

## Use

God’s purpose for the vision of the beast is plainly stated in verses 9 and 10.

1. Contrasting earth-dwellers who worship the beast, God calls out to those who have spiritual ears to hear.

Satan is at war with the saints; although he cannot harm them spiritually (as with Eve), he can harm them physically and will do so to many. Some will go to prison, some will die by the sword, all with God’s permission.

2. This serious reality is a call to the saints for endurance and faith.

The main business of the people of God is endurance through faith, “*entrusting themselves to Him who judges justly*” (1 Pet. 2:23).

God’s purpose in this is twofold:

(1) It weeds out phony professions (Matt. 13:21).

(2) It matures true saints to live lives that “*put to silence the ignorance of foolish people*” (1 Peter 2:15).