

REVELATION – SERMON 51

THE DEVIL INCARNATE

Revelation 13:1-4

INTRODUCTION

- The coming world leader, the beast, or antichrist, will be possessed and empowered by the devil himself
- Note that the “beast” refers both to a kingdom and an individual man
- As Christ was “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16), so the Antichrist will be the embodiment of Satan—the devil manifest in the flesh

I. THE MONSTROUS WORLDWIDE RULE OF THE BEAST (1-2)

A. Seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns

1. The beast is similar with the dragon who also has seven heads and ten horns, though having only seven crowns on his heads, instead of ten crowns on his horns (Revelation 12:3)
2. The seven heads are seven mountains, which indicate the city of Rome (Revelation 17:9)
3. They also describe seven kings/kingdoms, possibly to seven world governments throughout history, with the final being the kingdom of the beast (Revelation 17:10-11)
4. The fourth beast of Daniel’s vision representing Rome had ten horns (Daniel 7:7)
5. The final world empire as seen in the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream had ten kings, depicted by the ten toes (Daniel 2:41-42)
6. The beast’s empire appears to consist of a ten king/kingdom confederacy (Daniel 7:8,24; Revelation 17:12)
7. The placement of the crowns (*diademata*) upon the horns as opposed to the heads indicates that his authority rests on brute force

B. The name of blasphemy (cf. Revelation 17:3)

1. This blasphemy describes his hateful opposition of God, as well as his ascribing to himself the attributes of deity (Rev 13:6; Daniel 7:25; 11:36)

C. The likeness of the beast

1. The leopard, bear and lion match the beasts of Daniel's vision
 - a. Lion – Babylon (Daniel 7:4)
 - b. Bear – Medo-Persia (Daniel 7:5)
 - c. Leopard – Greece (Daniel 7:6)
 - d. Fourth beast – Rome (Daniel 7:7)
2. Antichrist's kingdom (the fourth beast) is a composite of the preceding three kingdoms, bearing elements of each
 - a. Hence the four world kingdoms are depicted in Daniel 2 as parts of one great image (Daniel 2:31)
 - b. John reverses the order of the beasts/kingdoms as he was looking back, while Daniel was looking forward
 - c. As a leopard, his reign will have the swiftness and strategy of the Greeks
 - d. As a bear, his reign will have the crushing power and brutality of the Medo-Persians
 - e. As a lion, his reign will have the majesty and absolute dominion of Babylon

D. Empowered by the dragon

1. The power/authority (*exousia*) of the beast is repeatedly emphasised in this chapter (vv. 2,4,5,7,12)
2. Satan is the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), and his power is great (Acts 26:18; Ephesians 6:12)
3. The beast does not come in his own power, but "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9)
4. The Lord Jesus refused the authority of Satan, but it will be accepted by this man of sin (Luke 4:6)
5. The relationship between the dragon and the beast is so close that to worship the beast is to worship Satan (v.4)

II. THE MORTAL WOUND AND RECOVERY OF THE BEAST (3)

- A. One of his heads was wounded to death, and healed

1. It is the seventh head which is wounded, and this is the beast himself (Revelation 17:10-11)
 2. This wounding and healing is a significant event in the beast's reign and becomes a defining moment (Revelation 13:12; 13:14)
 3. One interpretation is that the wounding and healing refers to the Roman Empire which died, but will again be revived
 - a. Yet the wounding and healing seem to take place in a short space of time as the same people who witness the wounding also witness the healing
 - b. The re-forming of a modern-day Roman Empire does not seem to be likely to cause the great wonderment of the people of the world which leads them to worship the beast
 3. It is the Antichrist himself who will be mortally wounded at the mid-point of the tribulation
 4. The Greek for "as it were wounded to death" is the same as that translated "as it had been slain" in Revelation 5:6
 5. He will be brought back to life and possessed by Satan
 6. Some think that it may be at this point he will "ascend out of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 11:7)
 7. Revelation 17:8 traces the career of the Antichrist: "was", "is not", "shall ascend", "shall go"
 8. As a "false Christ", this is his attempt to imitate the resurrection of Christ (cf. Revelation 1:18)
 9. Like Christ, the beast may bear the marks of his slaying after his reviving (Zechariah 11:17)
- B. All the world will wonder (marvel, admire) the beast (cf. Acts 28:3-6)

III. MANKIND'S WORSHIP AND REVERENCE OF THE BEAST (4)

- A. They worship the dragon
1. This Satan-worship is in response to the resurrection of the beast
 2. This may mean intentional and deliberate worship of Satan, or indirect worship of him as many idolators unknowingly worship Satan today (Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37; 1 Corinthians 10:20)

B. They worship the beast

1. "They" refers to "all the world" (v.3)
2. They are the "earth-dwellers" (unbelievers during the tribulation) "whose names are not written in the book of life" (Revelation 13:8)
3. This takes place in conjunction with the "abomination of desolation" when the Antichrist enthrones himself in the temple in Jerusalem as God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
4. This worship will incorporate the *image* of the beast (Revelation 13:15)

C. The words of their worship

1. "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"
2. These words of worship parody the many Old Testament praises of God which ask, "Who is like unto God?" (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 35:10; 113:5; Isaiah 40:18,25; 46:5; Micah 7:18)
3. The question at the end of 13:4 is answered in 17:14

CONCLUSION

1. From the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-6) to the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:7-10), rebellious man has chosen Satan over God
2. They serve the creature more than the Creator (Romans 1:25)
3. Mankind's continual cry is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke 19:14)
4. That is the same cry we hear constantly today
5. Every one of us are guilty of this same crime whenever we choose to disobey God
6. Even a Simon Peter, the great apostle, was called "Satan" by the Lord when his heart was contrary to God's will (Matthew 16:23)
7. Satan's power is indeed great—far greater than our own
8. Yet Christ has "spoiled principalities and powers" (Colossians 2:15)
9. Those who are in Christ "have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:13-14; Revelation 12:11)