

# The Beast from the Sea ~ Part 1

## Revelation 13:1-4

### The End Times

In my last post, we unpacked Revelation 12:13-18 regarding **The Woman Persecuted, But Preserved**. In this post, we move on to Revelation 13 and learn about the first of two beasts: **The Beast from the Sea**.

Chapter thirteen may well be one of the most important chapters in the book of Revelation! There is a reference to the remaining three and a half years of tribulation in verse 5, and the connection between the dragon of chapter twelve and the beasts of chapter thirteen is disclosed.

It is immediately apparent that the political and economic climate of today is beginning to set the stage for the reign of a world dictator. There is tremendous, and continual worldwide unrest as numerous and varied countries experience vast internal turmoil. There are those who are advocating the belief that the only solution to these economic, political, social and even religious problems is a one world government with a single currency and united action, as is already being adopted in the European community. The book of Revelation reveals that this one world government concept is exactly what will come to pass. With so much unrest among nations in economic bankruptcy, and with no sign of conditions becoming better; the masses of people will welcome a world government which promises that conditions will improve. Somebody (a super-human somebody) will appear on the scene and will gain the attention of the people and provide the leadership anticipated. This exalted leader will be HaSatan incarnate, and the world has never before known an absolute ruler like him. M. R. DeHaan writes: <sup>1</sup>

*During this brief time of the world's greatest sorrow, HaSatan will make his last great attempt to defeat the program of God by establishing his kingdom upon earth. He will seek to do this by instituting two great powers, one political and one religious. These two great powers will be two men, called in Revelation 13 "beasts" because of the viciousness and cruelty of their reign. These two men, representing two movements, will seek to set up a world federation of nations for political reasons and a world federation of churches for religious reasons."*

### The Beast from the Sea

**"Then the dragon stood on the seashore; <sup>1</sup> and I saw a beast come up out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads. On its horns were ten royal crowns and on its heads blasphemous names. <sup>2</sup> The beast which I saw was like a leopard, but with feet like those of a bear and a mouth like the mouth of a lion. To it the dragon gave its power, its throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup> One of the heads of the beast appeared to have received a fatal wound, but its fatal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed after the beast in amazement. <sup>4</sup> They worshipped the dragon, because he had given his authority to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?" ~ Revelation 12:18 - 13:4 (CJB) [Note that I added the last verse of chapter 12 that we discussed last time as more appropriately tied to this passage.]**

Once again we are faced with trying to decipher the imagery that Yochanan uses to describe what he is seeing. We learned the **red dragon** of chapter 12 is HaSatan. Chapter 13 introduces us to two beasts through which HaSatan establishes control over the multitudes of earth's people. The first beast which we will explore in this and the next post seems to be a political figure, and the second beast appears to be a religious figure. Both receive their power and direction from HaSatan, the great deceiver, and imitator.

To more fully grasp this imagery, we need to look back to the book of Daniel. Consequently, I will break this passage up into two parts to keep the length reasonable.

---

<sup>1</sup> A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

The first beast which rises out of the sea is thought to be the Antichrist. <sup>2</sup> The sea is a symbol for the multitudes of earth's people. Perhaps this is a hint that the Antichrist will be a politician who ordinarily rises to fame, as many others have done throughout history. This first beast "resembled" a leopard, had the feet of a bear, and a mouth like a lion. This description is similar to those of Daniel's.

***"I had a vision at night; I saw there before me the four winds of the sky breaking out over the great sea, <sup>3</sup> and four huge animals came up out of the sea, each different from the others. <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, but it had eagle's wings. As I watched, its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted off the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a human heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> Then there was another animal, a second one, like a bear. It raised itself up on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up, and gorge yourself with flesh!'<sup>6</sup> After this, I looked; and there was another one, like a leopard with four bird's wings on its sides. The animal also had four heads, and it was given power to rule. <sup>7</sup> After this, I looked in the night visions; and there before me was a fourth animal, dreadful, horrible, extremely strong, and with great iron teeth. It devoured, crushed and stamped its feet on what was left. It was different from all the animals that had gone before it, and it had ten horns."*** ~ Daniel 7:2-7 (CJB)

However, **Yochanan's** first beast seems to be most similar to Daniel's fourth beast, which retains, in some measure, the characteristics of his predecessors. Because the term "beast" is used, it is easy to imagine that its physical appearance is strange and animal-like. However, the resemblance to the leopard, bear, and lion may very well be in nonphysical characteristics, such as being a cunning hunter, someone who camouflages himself well in his setting.

***On its [ten] horns were ten royal crowns*** could be identical to the ten toes of the fourth beast in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:33, 40-43) and the ten horns of the fourth beast in Daniel's dream (Daniel 7:7, 24). An angel tells Daniel what the ten horns represent: ***"As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and yet another will arise after them. Now he will be different from the earlier ones, and he will put down three kings."*** ~ Daniel 7:24 (CJB)

Most theologians agree that the **ten horns** are ten nations that will rise to power in the end times (the restored Roman Empire) and the Antichrist will govern this ten nation empire and through it rule the world. Roy Hilton writes: <sup>3</sup>

*What else can all of this mean other than in the Day of the Lord there will appear a person called Antichrist, who will reign over his kingdom in a dictatorial manner? His political reign and rise to power makes a fascinating study. In Daniel 2:31-35 the prophet Daniel is telling Nebuchadnezzar what he (the king) had dreamed. "Thou, O King, sawest a great image like a man. It had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet and toes of iron mixed with clay." These metals represent a succession of Kingdoms that will rise and fall. We don't have to guess what these kingdoms are for Daniel tells us. "Thou art this head of gold" vs. 38. He was talking to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon; so the head of gold is Babylon. The second kingdom represented by the chest and arms of silver was Medio-Persian (Dan. 5:28, 31). The third kingdom represented by brass was Greece (Dan. 8:20, 21). The fourth kingdom of iron was Rome. These four kingdoms have come and gone-this is a fact of history. A fifth kingdom will eventually rise which will be a Federation of ten nations signified by the feet and ten toes. They will come together by common consent in an attempt to govern the world affairs of men. This will be a weak unity for Daniel says clay and iron cannot mix together with any strength. Out of this Federation of ten nations a leader will emerge who will be able to exert great power and influence. This leader will be the Anti-Christ (Read Dan. 7:8, 24; Rev. 13:1-10; 17:3).*

---

<sup>2</sup> I really prefer the title Anti-Messiah but acquiesce to the more common title.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit.

In my next post, we will continue to unpack **Revelation 13:1-4**.

### **Special Comparative Note on Chapter 13:1-4**<sup>4</sup>

As you might imagine, each of the four views has a lot to say about this passage. In the interest of keeping this post shorter, I will list the **Historicist** and the **Preterist** comments in this post and the **Futurist** and **Idealist** in the next.

#### **Historicist Approach:**

Because of the similarities of this **Beast from the Sea** with Daniel 7, virtually all **Historicists** identify this beast with Rome. The **seven heads** symbolize the seven hills of Rome. The papacy has been closely tied to this first beast by most Protestants for many centuries. [When we get to verse 11 we encounter a second beast from the earth. **Historicists** identify both beasts with Rome, and it will be easier to discuss the nuances between the two and the deadly wound at that time.]

#### **Preterist Approach:**

**Preterists** consider the sea as an emblem of the Gentile world from which Daniel's four beasts arose (Daniel 7:1ff.). In addition to information about this beast contained later in Revelation 17, most Preterists tie this beast to the Roman Empire and in particular Emperor Nero. The **fatal wound** to one of the heads in verse 3 has puzzled many. At the death of Nero, the Roman Empire was thrown into violent civil war and anarchy. The recovery of the empire under Vespasian was a marvel to all – the beast of the empire had survived the mortal wounding of one of its heads. Alternatively, Julius Ceasar has been identified with the wounded head.

---

<sup>4</sup> Material in this post is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.