



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Revelation

Chapter 13

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Introduction

- This chapter reveals two agents the dragon (Satan) would use in carrying out his war against the people of God
- The first is the beast from the sea
- The second is the beast from the land

Chapter outline

- The Beast From the Sea (1-10)
- The Beast From the Land (1-18)

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- The sea represents the great, restless mass of human kind; or, as it is expressed in Revelation 17:15, “peoples and multitudes.”
- St. James represented an undecided man as a wave driven by the wind, James 1:6
- The individuals, like larger and smaller waves, make up this great ocean-like mass of men, swayed by impulse or passion
- The sea is used in Scripture as a symbol of the world in chaos as a result of the rebellion of men and nations against God
- It is a symbol of the world with all its lusts and passions



The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10

- The wild beast is always the figure of the kingdoms of this world
- The Sea Beast is the mirror image of the dragon but it is not the dragon
- They are seven in number, as the beast had seven heads
- We read afterwards of seven mountains
- These world-powers are spoken of as mountains for their strength and stability; as heads of the wild beast because, though separate, they are inspired by the dragon spirit, the spirit of utter enmity to the rule of the Righteous King
- *seven heads* , Is also a sign of its strength where he can change the means and method of his war against men

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- The seven kingdoms, or heads of the wild beast, are more distinctly explained in Revelation 17:10
- The beast has, besides seven heads, ten horns, which are explained further in Revelation 17:12 as “*the kings which have received no kingdom as yet,*” but which, when they rise, will draw their strength from the dragon and be members of the wild beast
- The mission of this beast is, “to blaspheme against God,” as for his description, it is a metaphorical image which declares his great hatred to the truth and to the Church

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- Blasphemy is claiming to be God or claiming for oneself what belongs to God
- Some commentators saw that the *seven heads and ten horns* as seven nations and ten kings
- They are under the authority of the Beast
- Some explained the *ten crowns* to be the ten Roman Emperors who persecuted the church starting from Nero and ending with Diocletian which is the worst time of persecution the church lived

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- The wild beast combined the features of three wild animals; the leopard, the bear, and the lion
- The wild beast is a representative of all forms of world-power, which have been swift to shed blood: like a leopard leaping on the victim, steadfast, persistent, and uncompromising as a bear, and all devouring (their throat is an open grave) as a lion
- He is fast in his move to persecute the Church; he is a betrayer, and no compassion or mercy is in his heart

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- His feet are strong and harsh and he is rigid and stubborn in his war against the Church
- *the mouth of a lion*, Bishop Victorianus says, “His mouth is armed; in it dwells blood shedding, and from his tongue comes out nothing but ferocity.”
- As the Father gave all authority to the Son, the dragon likewise, gives all his satanic power, his evil throne, and his authority to the Antichrist, until he captivates and deceives people, in order to worship him, and abandon the worship of the living God
- The wild beast becomes the deputy of the prince of this world



The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10

- The head had received a fatal wound, and yet the beast continued to exist and exert his power
- There may be a contrast and a comparison intended between the Lamb, as it had been slain, worshipped by His followers, and the beast, assuming and seizing the honor due to Christ, imitating Him even in the respect of having been slain, and exacting honor from those who *marveled and followed the beast*
- But the "head smitten unto death" must still possess some special significance of its own

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- What that is we are not plainly told; but it seems reasonable to refer it to Christ crushed the head of Satan in His Resurrection and Ascension
- With Christ's Ascension and the spread of the Gospel across the Roman world Satan's head receives a mortal wound
- It almost seemed at first as though the power of the world must submit to the influence of the life and death of our Lord, and for a time great progress was made in the increase of the number of believers, Acts 2:41,47

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- But the power of the world was not yet destroyed; it continued to exist in spite of the seemingly fatal wound
- Some see in this account a reference to the destruction of the Roman pagan empire, and the establishment of the Christian empire
- Others believe the rage to be that administered by Michael, when Satan was ejected from heaven
- Others refer the wounded head to different individuals; e.g. Nero
- *the world*, All the earth
- As the original word signifies earth, and not world

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- Many were deceived by him and bowed down to the dragon, in the person of the Antichrist
- They did it, as is immediately specified, by saying that he was "incomparable" and "invincible"; in other words, that he was superior to all others, and that he was almighty
- The devil in his temptation to our Lord, had sought to fascinate Christ by offering to Him all the kingdoms of the world
- His efforts with men are more successful
- They worship him on account of the worldly wealth and influence which he bestows

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- *Who is like the beast?* He is to be regarded as unequalled and as supreme
- This was, in fact, ascribing honors to him which belonged only to God
- *Who is able to make war with him?* That is, he is invincible and supreme
- They thus attributed to him omnipotence - an attribute belonging only to God



The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10

- The beast assumes the honor due to God alone (the song of those who had triumphed in Revelation 15:4 *"Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."* Exodus 15:11; Micah 7:18)
- The followers of the beast thus cherished their belief in his superior skills and his ability to succeed in his war against those who *"keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus."*

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- In these verses the words and the works of the wild beast are described
- The 5th verse tells us that the liberty to speak and work was given to him
- There is consolation in the words: he has no power beyond what is given; behind his reckless and apparently irresistible power there stands the hidden but real power of God
- The power of the beast is, after all, only held by the consent of God, who for his own good purpose permits him to exercise it for a time

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- The "*great things*" are the promises of superior power and good, with which the devil seeks to allure men, as he did Adam and Eve at the first
- All attempts to belittle and criticize God's omnipotence and the power of Christ are blasphemies
- *blasphemy against God*, By sitting as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God; and to be worshipped as God
- By his idolatrous practices commanded by him, as the worshipping of idols of gold, silver, wood, and stone, which is in Scripture called blaspheming God, Isaiah 65:7 and Daniel 11:36

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- By *heaven* is here meant the throne of God
- This must therefore allude to his irreverent adoration of the saints and angels, whose residence is in heaven
- *His tabernacle* To blaspheme against the Church, the house of God, when he enters the churches and defile them
- Once again, the 42 months or 3 1/2 years is a limited time of persecution
- It is a broken 7 and is a symbolic figure in prophetic language, signifying a time of trouble when the enemies of God are in power or when judgment is being poured out

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- Notice the use of, *"it was given ... and granted"* in verses 5 and 7 which implies that it is God who permits the Beast four temporal privileges
- These privileges are:
 1. A mouth which blasphemes v. 5
 2. Conquest of the holy ones v. 7
 3. Authority for 42 months v. 5
 4. Power over all people v. 8

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- This passage is a reference to Daniel 7:6-27, *“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom”* (Daniel 7:21)
- *He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.”* (Daniel 7:25)
- That is another reference to the 42 month period of suffering

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- The conquest is not a conquest of their fidelity; it is rather that the beast so far succeeds that the saints must suffer or submit
- The saints seem to be single handed; for there was given him *authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation*
- Nor does his success end here; verse 8 shows us how completely earth is at his feet

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- *All who dwell on the earth*, There are 12 references to this phrase in Revelation 3:10, 6:10, 8:13, 11:10 [twice], 13:8,12,14 [twice], 14:6, 17:2,8
- Once for each of the 12 tribes of Israel, to refer to apostate Israel
- This is the best moment of his triumph: he, or it, is worshipped; but the saints, though conquered, conquer
- They do not worship after the fashion of the deceived or self-seeking

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- A stronger tie binds them to a better allegiance; their names are in the Lamb's *Book of Life*
- Those over whom the beast has authority are those who worship him, and whose names have not "*been written in the book of life*"
- The expression, "*book of life*," is found only in this book and Philippians 4:3
- In all the places where it occurs it seems to refer primarily to Christians, Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5, 20:12,15, 21:27, 22:19

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- It is "*the Book of Life of the Lamb*," because it is through "*the Lamb*" that there exists a "*Book of Life*" for men
- At baptism the Christian's name is written in the "*Book of Life*" from which there is always a possibility of it being blotted out, Revelation 3:5
- Those who are not Christians do not have their name in the "*Book of Life*," but worship the beast, that is, pay allegiance to him
- *Slain from the foundation of the world*: Does not mean He was *Slain from the foundation of the world*, but it was God's plan *from the foundation of the world*

The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10



- Verse 9 is an echo of Our Savior's words to draw attention to the warning words of the next verse
- Verse 10 is generally understood to be a caution to the suffering saints that there is nothing for them but to endure
- The spirit of the words reminds them that their weapons are the weapons of faith and patience, of truth and righteousness; and they must accept the tribulation, as their Lord did His cross, because thus it must be



The Beast From the Sea 13:1-10

- At the same time, their very doing so is a witness to their enemies that “*he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword*”
- And that the sword, from which the saints do not decline or diminish, will assuredly turn against those who use it
- He encourages the suffering Church not to be afraid of what the Antichrist is doing, for his work will turn back on him
- His punishment will be of the same kind as his deed, according to what the Lord says, Matthew 7:2, and Jeremiah the prophet said as well, Jeremiah 15:2

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- *beast coming up out of the earth*, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Ibn-al-Assal, and others think, that he is the false prophet (Matthew 24:24), who comes before the Antichrist or accompanies him
- Just as John the Baptist came before Jesus Christ
- For this reason, St. Irenaeus calls him "carrier of the arm of the Antichrist"
- He and the Antichrist are one in purpose; he works on his behalf, under his name, and with his power
- Therein he imitates the Holy Spirit and witnesses to the Antichrist

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- The Image of the Beast is a continuation of the Satanic imitation: the demonic reversal of God's order
- Fr. Hyppolitus explains, “It was meant by the beast who is coming out of the earth, the kingdom of the Antichrist; and the two horns point to the Antichrist and those who are with him, or the false prophet. By saying, “*he spoke like a dragon,*” *he means* that he is a deceiver, who does not say the truth.”
- He seems meek (as a lamb), as he tries to be like the true Lamb in his gentleness and love, but his language reveals him, as he speaks a satanic language, deceiving, brutal, and vicious

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- It is important to remember that false prophecy is not a pagan culture phenomena but is instead a heresy that appears only within the covenant context
- It is an imitation of true prophecy and operates to deceive God's covenant people and to work in opposition to His true prophets
- How does the Dragon speak?
- He used deceptive, subtle, seductive speech to draw God's people away from the faith and into his trap (Genesis 3:1-6,13; 2 Corinthians 11:13; Revelation 12:9)

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- He is also a liar, a slanderer, and a blasphemer (John 8:44; Revelation 12:10)
- The book of Acts is full of examples of these Satanic false witnesses persecution the New Covenant Church
- If we compare the first Beast, of the sea to this one we find that:
- They are both wild beasts
- They both have horns
- They both have a dragon-like inspiration, Revelation 13:11
- They both act with dictatorship over men

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- But, on the other hand, the second beast is less monstrous in appearance
- We read only of two horns, and we hear nothing of seven heads
- He somewhat resembles a lamb
- He rises from the earth, and not from the sea
- His power lies in deception, Revelation 13:13-14, as well as violence
- He seems to possess more supernatural power

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Yet the whole of his work is directed to magnifying the first beast, Revelation 13:12
- These features lead us to the conclusion that the principles which the second wild beast supports are the same as those on which the former wild beast acted, but that he supports them with more subtlety, intelligence, and culture
- His work is to promote the honor of the first wild beast
- Because of this seductiveness, and of his efforts to support his mission with higher sanctions, Revelation 13:13, he is called in later chapters, Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10, the False Prophet

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- *exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, His influence over men, though less directly asserted, is equal to that of the first beast*
- Those who dwell in the earth are the worldly, not faithful Christians, but those, *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb*
- This beast causes men to worship the first beast by persuading them into a compliance with his will, and making them pay reverence to him
- For this reason he is called in Revelation 16:13 the *false prophet*

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- He stirs up people to worship the Antichrist, and he affirms that with satanic signs and wonders
- St. Irenaeus says, “No one should think that he performs these miracles by the divine power, but it is by magic. Do not be surprised at that, as far as devils and the resisting spirits are in his service. Through them he does great things, which lead the inhabitants of the earth to deviation.”
- He pretends, like other false prophets, to show great signs and wonders, and even to call for fire from heaven, as Elijah did, 2 Kings 1:11-12

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Bishop Victorianus says, “The magicians do these things in our days with the help of the resisting angels. He will keep the horrible image of the "Antichrist" in the temple in Jerusalem, and the opposing angel will enter there and perform sounds and wonders. Moreover, he will suggest to his servants, his sons, to accept a sign on their foreheads and on their right hands, with the number of his name... Daniel had prophesied before, about his disdain for God and his struggle against Him. He says about him, that he will erect his temple in Samaria, and erect an image (a statue) on the holy mountain in Jerusalem, as Nebuchadnezzar has done.”

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Bishop Victorianus continues, “Concerning this abomination of desolation, the Lord advises His Churches about the end of times and its dangers, Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27. It is called the abomination of desolation because of causing God’s anger by prompting to the worship of idols instead of the true God, or because of the sneaking of groups of heretics into the Church. Many will deviate, and get deceived by the false signs and threats, and will abandon their salvation.”
- He is said to perform his miracles *in the sight of men*, in order to deceive them,

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- In Matthew 24:24 Jesus warned that *“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”*
- *he deceives*, He leads them astray
- This is the key to his success, he exalts and idolizes the spirit of worldliness
- But he does it by deception and subtlety
- There is an appearance of wonderful power
- He can work lying wonders

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- *those who dwell on the earth* , Are the worldly minded, as in verse 12
- Even a miracle is not enough to warrant belief in a professed revelation unless that revelation be in harmony with God's already revealed will
- *he was granted* , The power possessed by the beast does not originate with himself; he possesses it only subject to the will of God (verses 5 and 7)
- He is said to perform his miracles in the sight of the beast, in order to serve him

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- *in the sight of the beast* , To his honor, and to gain him a reputation
- As God gave his prophets and apostles a power to work true miracles for the confirmation of their mission from Him, and of the doctrines which they brought; so he permitted others to work lying wonders for the confirmation of their false doctrine
- The apostle therefore describes the coming of antichrist to be with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, 2 Thessalonians 2:9,10

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- This beast suggested that men should set up an image of the first beast, not in order to pay greater honor to the first beast, but that an apparent alternative might be offered to men, so that those who hesitated to pay direct allegiance to the first beast might overcome their conscience and worship something which resembled him, while allowing them to, as it were, cheat their own consciences by persuading themselves that they were not worshipping the beast himself

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- The statue is an image of the Beast, and the False Prophet uses his demonic power to breathe life into so that the image might speak
- When God created man in His image how did He bring man to life?
- God breathed on Adam to give him life
- What is the next thing Adam does in Genesis 2:19-20?
- Adam speaks, naming and defining the creation in terms of God's mandate

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- This is the parallel between the False Prophet's creation and God's creation
- The only other time God breathed on man was when Jesus breathed on the Apostles after the Resurrection in John 20:22
"He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."
- *would not worship*, Would not honor it, or acknowledge its authority
- The *image of the beast* had power given it, by its connection with the second "beast" to set up its authority and control over people, and to secure their allegiance

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- We, the children of God, are proud of the mark of the Lord Jesus with which we are sealed by the Holy Spirit
- In the same way the Antichrist makes for himself a mark which is prompted by the second beast that men be sealed with it
- It is the mark of cherishing evil and blaspheming God
- Thus it is printed on the forehead
- Also the mark of the violence of evil and of resisting the children of God, therefore it is printed on the right hand
- Also the right hand is the symbol of toil and social interaction
- The forehead is the symbol of character

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Right hand in Scripture language, when used figuratively, represents the physical power of the person of whom it is spoken; and when applied to God designates a signal manifestation of Divine power against His enemies, and in behalf of his people, Psalm 17:7, 20:6, 21:8, 45:4
- The reception of the mark in the right hand must therefore mean, that all so receiving it devote the whole powers of their mind and body to him
- By any thing being impressed upon the forehead, is meant the public profession of whatever is inscribed or marked upon it, Revelation 9:4, 14:1, 22:4

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- St. Ephram the Syrian thinks, that the Antichrist prints his mark on the foreheads of his followers, or on their right hands, that they may think no more of making the sign of the cross with their right hands on their foreheads, thereby he is sure that his evil authority permanently dominates them.
- Fr. Hyppolitus says, “It is because they are completely deceived, that they glorify him by this mark. Thus to vigorously annoy and persecute the servants of God in the world, those who do not glorify him, or offer incense to him. None of the saints can buy or sell if he do not offer sacrifice to him. And that is what he means by the mark on the right hand.”

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- The false prophet, the partner of world-power, seeks to impress a mark on all, on the penalty of complete social exclusion
- This mighty power would claim control over the traffic of the world, and endeavor to make it tributary to its own purposes, Compare Revelation 18:11-13 and Revelation 18:17-19
- This is represented by saying that *no one may buy or sell except* by its permission; and it is clear that where this power exists of determining who may "*buy and sell*," there is absolute control over the wealth of the world

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- In this verse we have the very name of the beast given under the symbol of the number 666
- "*Here is wisdom*, Means that the matter needs special wisdom, as the human wisdom is still inadequate to know the name
- The highest wisdom is needed for those who would understand it
- Ibn al-Assal thinks, that God had hidden the name, so that none of the kings or the heretics may adopt it, and confuse the prophecies

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Many of the Fathers think that he mentioned his number simply to confirm the truth, that he is in fact a man and has a name, and man can count his name to find that it is 666
- In the Greek, Latin and the Coptic alphabet it has numeric indications and each letter has a special number. If we add the indications of all the letters of the name, we find it sums up to 666
- St. Iranaeus thinks that the number 666 is probably the number of heresies, which have come to rise from the beginning of mankind to the day of the coming of the Lord, and they all represent the Antichrist

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Another opinion said that the numerical indications of the name of the Lord Jesus is 888
- St. John Climacus says, that number “8” indicates the eternal life, as number “7” indicates the temporal life, and the new day of the following week is "8“
- Therefore, in the past, God asked that circumcision be performed in the eighth day, and the resurrection of the Lord was accomplished at the dawn of Sunday, or the eighth day, or the beginning of the new week

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- So the number of the Lord "Jesus" is 888, which means heavenly, surely and completely
- The number "6" is inferior to "7" or incomplete which indicates that the beast is not only temporal but also totally incomplete
- There is another opinion of St. Iranaeus ; he thinks, that number 666 indicates that the beast carries all kinds of evil and deceit, and all forces of resistance are blocked up within him

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



This meaning was previously symbolized in different ways:

- 600 years, the age of Noah when the deluge destroyed the world because of corruption and evil
- 60 cubits long was the length of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar erected for worshipping (Daniel 30:2), 6 cubits wide, and because of that statue the three young men were thrown into the furnace of fire
- The number 666, meant the anger of God at mankind until He drowned it
- The Church tolerates every hardship for the sake of the truth

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Six is the 'signature' of non-perfection; and, this number is also a symbol of human rule and power
- The numerical symbol of the beast, 666, indicates that he aims at and aspires to the attributes of Christ, and puts forth a semblance of Christian truth, but falls away from it in a triple decline and degeneracy

The Beast From the Land

13:11-18



- Fr. Hyppolitus says that many names in Greek total 666, but the word "I deny," in Greek also totals 666
- Therefore it is enough for us to know, that he will come denying and refuting faith in the Lord Jesus, appointing himself as a king
- Surely the dignity of the Apocalypse is sacrificed when we search for its meaning



Discussion

- What is the relationship between *“the dragon”* and the *“beast coming up out of the sea”*?
- What does John mean when he writes, *“I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed”*? How do the words *“as if”* (“like”) help you understand this sentence? Why is the whole earth *“marveled?”* Why do they follow after the beast?
- Who gave the beast his *“mouth”* and his *“authority to act”*? What is significant about the period of *“forty-two months?”*



Discussion

- How does it make you feel to hear people blaspheme God? What should your response be when you hear someone blaspheme God?
- Reflect on verse 10, and how it would speak to Christians through the ages.
- What is the primary purpose of the beast from the land? What is so significant about the first beast's *“fatal wound [that] was healed”*?
- What is *“the mark”* of the beast? Where is it given? What does the mark symbolize?