

**Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School**  
**Revelation Bible Study**  
**Chapter 13**

**Introduction (1:1 - 3:22)**

(Including Seven Letters to the Seven Churches - preparation / call for repentance)

**The Inaugural Vision of Heaven, Introducing the Message (4:1 - 5:14)**

**The Prophecy (6:1 - 16:21)**

1. First Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End - Seven Seals (6:1 - 8:5)
2. Second Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End - Disorders in nature accompanied by sufferings of evil afflict humanity - Seven Trumpets (8:6 - 11:19)
3. Interlude - The Cosmic Warfare between Christ and Satan, between God's saints and the forces of evil (12:1 - 14:20)
  - A. The woman with Child and the Dragon (12:1-18)
  - B. The Evil Forces of the Dragon: the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth (13:1-19)
  - C. The Conquering Lamb and victory song of the saints (14:1-5)
  - D. The Defeat of the Dragon and His Beasts Announced (14:6-13)
  - E. The Son of Man and the Harvest at the End (14:14-20)
4. Third Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End: Plagues of God's Wrath as God's Judgment is poured out on the human race (15:1 - 16:21)

**The Conclusion: The End and the New Heaven and New Earth (17:1 - 22:5)**

**Epilogue (22:6-21)**

**The Beast from the Sea (13:1-10)**

- To get an Old Testament assist on this, see Daniel 7
- Daniel sees four beasts - lion, bear, leopard, and a beast unlike the previous
- John sees one beast - but with characteristics of a leopard, bear, and lion
- Daniel's fourth beast is the beast that John sees
- Roman Empire (a future enemy in Daniel's day) is the fourth beast of Daniel and the beast John sees
- Notice that, according to Daniel's vision, the Messiah comes during the time of the fourth beast
  
- The beast comes from the sea - the Old Testament viewed the sea as churning, violent, and the place of chaos and destruction (see Isaiah 57:20-21 and Psalm 74:13-14). Compare this also to Jesus calming the storm / tossing of the Sea of Galilee in Matthew 8:26.

- Identity of the beast
  - For at least the first 5 centuries of the Christian church, Christians identified this beast as the Roman Empire - for many good reasons!
  - The beast represents and symbolizes every human authority and everything of the human nature that the dragon can corrupt and control and use in his warfare against the woman (the church) and her seed (individual Christians): political, governmental, social, economic, philosophical, and educational systems, as well as individuals.
  - There have been, are, and will be individual leaders and governments that, more than others, bear the characteristics of the beast from the sea in Revelation 13; there is no one specific individual / government to which this section of Scripture refers. It refers to ANY government / individual which Satan can use to thwart the work of Christ and His Church.
  - One head having a fatal wound, but the beast recovering from the fatal wound, suggests that one leader / government that is used by Satan will be replaced by another.
  
- Power / Authority of the beast
  - Mankind ends up worshiping the beast.
  - This is symbolic of when people place their hope and trust in human institutions and affairs and resort to them in place of God.
  - The saints of God in Christ Jesus are the particular focus of attack by the beast
  - (Notice we have the reappearance of the "3 1/2 year" motif - even though the power and attack of the beast from the sea (earthly, political, societal factors) will be strong and powerful, their days are numbered!)
  
- Comfort for God's saints
  - Those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will not worship the Beast from the Sea.
  - (See other places where the "Book of Life" - or "Lamb's Book of Life" - are mentioned in Revelation: 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27)
  - Here is the call for us to hear the Word of God and follow Christ (remember this is the same ending as each of the Seven Letters had in Revelation 2 - 3).
  - <sup>NLT</sup> **Revelation 13:10** The people who are destined for prison will be arrested and taken away. Those who are destined for death will be killed. *But do not be*

*dismayed, for here is your opportunity to have endurance and faith.*

- -It is in such suffering and trials that the faith of the saints shines forth to the world, and the saints realize what God is accomplishing in permitting the beast to conquer them. For in such "patience" and "faith" the church entrusts her own care to God, knowing that in God's own time He will also mete out justice upon her foes.

### The Beast from the Earth (13:11-18)

- Identity of the beast
  - While the beast from the sea represents every tyranny by human power and enterprise (political, social, economic, educational, and so forth), the beast from the earth represents religious tyranny.
  - There is a progression of terms here in Revelation to refer to this religious tyranny:
  - Here in chapter 13 it's "beast from the earth."
  - In later chapters it will be "false prophet" (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)
  - "The harlot" in chapters 17-18
  - This suggests that while the beast from the earth might first represent all false religions and spiritual movements, including gross idolatry and pseudo-Christianity, as time goes on it develops and evolves into its more deadly form, that of the apostate Christianity of the pseudo-church, the Antichrist.
- Activities of the beast from the earth
  - The beast does all sorts of things to encourage worship of the first beast. Think of how, throughout history, what ended up to be evil empires used religion in its attempt to gain "followers" of the state.
  - The beast performs all sorts of signs and wonders - all the time trying to deceive the earth's inhabitants.
  - An image is set up in honor of the first beast.
  - Magical trickery, spiritism, and witchcraft were widespread and also influential at John's time. Is there anything different today?
- Mark of the beast from the earth

- The beast's name is represented by its number.
- Number of the beast
- Many people / cultures in the ancient world used letters to symbolize numbers (hence - Roman numerals). This practice is called "gematria."
  - The whole matter of "gematria" could point to "Nero Caesar" - if done in transliterated Hebrew letters.
  - But this sounds all to "cryptic" for the character of Revelation. Throughout this book, up to this point, we have seen visions and witnessed things that point us to Christ, to His victory, to the spiritual war going on, but we have never been given a cryptic message with some kind of key to unlock it. And neither have we here in Revelation 13:18.
  - Man's number is 6 (created on 6th day, one short of the perfect number of 7) - and there is now an unholy trinity of forces against Christ and His Church: the dragon, the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth.
  - The "wisdom" called for in this verse is simply a gift from God - the gift that comes with faith and an ever deepening faith. This wisdom enables the Christian to recognize all the forces - human and spiritual - arranged against Christ, His Church, and those who call upon Him in faith.
  - This wisdom also reveals the victory that is ours in Christ Jesus!

Reminder:

- 1) Email your questions to Pastor Bill: [billm@deeplyrootedtogrow.org](mailto:billm@deeplyrootedtogrow.org)
- 2) You can access these study guides on the church website. Navigate under "Ministries" to "Bible Studies" to the download page for the Revelation study.