

**Intro.** I need to start this message with an apology—God’s Word says there are private apologies to be made & public ones, whenever the public is affected. I sit down a couple of times a year and seek the Lord’s direction on what to preach in the upcoming months. I share that information with Jasen Brown, our Music Pastor, so he can prayerfully consider what songs to sing. The series on “When All of Hell Breaks Loose on Earth” hasn’t lent itself to too many songs, but Revelation 13 on “The Antichrist” is especially true. So, Jasen, I’m sorry for picking a text which is so hard to connect to songs for worship. Maybe you & I could work on some songs together to sing should I preach on this text again in 10 years. Let’s look at Revelation 13 together.

Theme: The Antichrist

Background: Revelation 12-14 appear to be a clear-cut section in Revelation, focusing primarily on the last 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation. Satan, appearing as a great red dragon & serpent has pursued Israel, Christ & the Church.

- When chapter 12 concludes with “he stood on the sand of the sea,” it’s talking about the great red dragon. The opening of chapter 13 reveals a beast rising out of the sea. Thus, Satan the dragon is calling forth this beast to aid him in his work of persecuting Israel & the Church.
- I want to walk you through this text & show you 3 big truths & then relate those truths to 3 areas of application.

**Explanation of the Text:**

**I. The beast from the sea is the Antichrist (13:1-8)**

**A. It is probably a person (rather than an organization) who has great influence (13:1f)**

- Other places in Scripture highlight this Antichrist—1 John 2:18, 22; 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (the man of lawlessness); Daniel 7:8 (the little horn)

**B. The Antichrist brings world leaders together (13:1-2, 5)**

- The reference to the beast having similarities with a leopard, bear & lion point to the visions given to Daniel in chapters 2 & 7, representing the previous world powers of Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece & finally Rome
- The numbers 10 & 7 may simply refer to complete & total authority & power, but since some understanding is given elsewhere, it probably means more than that
- Revelation 17:9-11 says the 7 heads are 7 mountains (many ancient scholars have noted Rome was known as the “city of 7 hills”) & they are also 7 kings
- Revelation 17:11 says the beast is an 8<sup>th</sup> king, but belongs to the 7 (Daniel 7 teaches there are 10 groups united & the “little horn” overthrows 3 of them)
- The 10 horns are 10 kings who have not received power yet, but they will have it with the beast for “one hour” (17:12)—a very short reign

**C. Unbelievers will worship Satan & the Antichrist (13:3-4, 8)**

- The prefix “anti” can mean “against” but it can also mean “in place of”—the Antichrist will be against Christ & His people but he will also set himself up in place of Christ with an apparent resurrection from a mortal wound
- He receives worship, just like Christ, & causes others to worship the dragon (Satan), just as Christ causes others to worship God the Father
- “those who dwell on the earth” (13:8) always refers to unbelievers in Revelation & they will worship the Antichrist

**D. The Antichrist will target God’s people (13:7-8, 10)**

- He will carry out the desires of the dragon, Satan, who pursued the woman’s (Israel’s) offspring (12:17)

**II. God’s people are in heaven & on earth during these days (13:6-10)**

**A. Some believers dwell in heaven (13:6)**

- Those who have already died in the faith are now present with the Lord & dwell in heaven

## **B. Other believers are the object of the Antichrist's war (13:7-8, 10)**

- That the Antichrist “makes war on the saints” (13:7) & there are those whose names are written “in the Lamb’s book of life” (13:8) & a call for the saints to endure in the faith (13:10) all underscore the reality of believers living through the Great Tribulation—while some say these are those who become believers after a pre-Tribulation rapture, the Bible doesn’t say that

## **III. God's people have been predestined & preserved (13:8)**

- Notice how God preserves His people by marking them off in advance—v. 8 teaches the people of God have had their names recorded in the Lamb’s book of life “before the foundation of the world” (before creation)
- While some scholars say the phrasing here could mean Christ was going to be a Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world (clearly taught in 1 Peter 1:19-20), but 17:8 says the unbelievers names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (with no reference to the Lamb)
- I know predestination can be a touchy subject, but it’s one of the deep doctrines of God’s Word which isn’t settled quickly in our minds, & while the word “predestination” doesn’t occur in this passage, “predestined” occurs in Romans 8 & Ephesians 1, so it is a biblical notion
- Suffice it to say here that God sets aside His people in advance by His grace without any regard to what they have done or what they will do, but His work of predestination in no way excuses us from the responsibilities of repentance from sin & faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

### **Application of the Text:**

#### **I. Worship & serve the One True God made known through the Person & work of Jesus Christ (13:4, 8)**

- This chapter is about worshiping the wrong god & should serve as a reminder for us to worship the One True God who has made Himself known through Jesus—Jesus always pleased the Father & never sinned, while the Antichrist will blaspheme God

Illus: Just because the Bible is sometimes quoted doesn’t mean you are in a true church worshiping the One True God, because Satan can take Bible passages out of context & misapply them (like he did with Jesus during the Temptation), just like is being done in many health-wealth-prosperity churches today

#### **II. No matter how difficult life becomes, persevere in the Christian faith (13:10)**

- It’s hard to discern whether v. 10 means those who take others captive & slay them with the sword will also be taken captive & slain with the sword eventually or that it means believers will be captured & killed for their faith, but the latter seems more likely in this context (though the former is also true)

Illus: Believers in Indonesia, China, North Korea & throughout the Middle East & North Africa are suffering greatly for their faith & we should pray for their faith’s resolve

#### **III. Endure in the Christian faith with other believers (13:10)**

- Notice how this passage ends—as a call for the endurance & faith “of the saints” (plural)—God doesn’t expect us to go through the Christian life alone, because we need each other

Illus: While you can attend worship in a church, the best place for you to journey through the Christian life is in a small group or SS class, because you will get to know a few people far better than several hundred people (or even thousands in some churches)

**Conc.** I began this message with an apology to Jasen about not having a good song to sing about this text. I’m not saying it’s an appropriate song to sing in worship, but one character we are probably all familiar with who wants to rob people of joy is found in Dr. Seuss’ “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas.” Even the song, “You’re a Mean One, Mr. Grinch” underscores just how bad he is with things like “given the choice between you and a seasick crocodile, I’d take the seasick crocodile” & “Your soul is an appalling dump heap Overflowing with the most disgraceful Assortment of deplorable rubbish imaginable, Mangled up in tangled up knots” & “You’re a three-decker sauerkraut And toadstool sandwich, With arsenic sauce!” Maybe we should change it to “You’re a Mean One, Antichrist...” We should want nothing to do with him as we pledge our allegiance anew to Christ in keeping the Christian faith with other believers.