



The First Beast of Blaspheme

Revelation 13:1-10



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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Main Idea: The Beast will present itself as god. Do not be fooled.

As the dragon stands on the edge of the sea, the devil begins to summon forth two beasts in chapter 13. The first comes from the sea (vs. 1-10) and the second comes from the earth (vs. 11-18). Each are equally frightening but different in their approach. For both, the purpose of the beasts remains the same; to spread the false gospel that the dragon can provide life and safety to people. At this point, the dragon knows his days are numbered and that he will ultimately see his demise and end. Yet, the nature of the dragon seeks destruction for the people. He deceives others in hopes of bringing the destruction that will befall him to others. For a time, it will feel as if the tides have turned in favor of the beast. It will see as though the enemy has succeeded. People will worship the false God and those of the faith will be challenged and some will die. Yet, throughout this, the nature of the dragon cannot be forgotten. For everything we have seen, remember the angels, creatures of heaven, and elders who stood before the throne. Remember the lightning and pearls of thunder that came from the nature of God. Remember the giants and spiritual beings who roam the earth at the command of God as instruments of His judgment on the earth. Everything will submit to the holiness and sovereignty of God no matter what life appears to bring.

The Beast Who Blasphemes God

The first beast comes from the land and presents a terrifying picture. With seven heads and ten crown, it presents an image of the ability to rule and govern over the world. Yet, blasphemous names against the one true God are written on the horns. Its message speaks against God and directs people to worship the dragon. Although defeated and wounded and unsuccessful in its attempt to usurp the people of faith, the beast derives its power from the dragon and encourages all to worship the dragon. Furthermore, the beast presents itself with what appears to be a

fatal wound that the beast has healed from. It demonstrates a (false) ability to recover from death. With every move, it sought the attention of men to direct them away from God and to the dragon. The beast remains nothing short of a blasphemous false prophet that actively seeks to draw people away from the safety of the grace and salvation offered by Jesus Christ.

Very likely, the image is symbolic as to the true nature of what is to come rather than a literal beast. Yet, the nature of the beast will shine through. The beast will present itself with false signs of spiritual longevity, able to have conquered death. With the fatal wound, the beast presented the image of spiritual victory. The beast presented itself as a counterfeit Jesus Christ, able to conquer the throngs of death and in the process declaring that the beast will be victorious. Nothing will be further from the truth. The beast, while terrifying, frightening, and convincing serves the dragon who fully understands that its days are numbered. The church must with all her might resist the allure of the beast. The church must, for the sake of every member, continually grow in our understanding and closeness to the real Savior. We must continue to shine our light for the world to see and continually represent the image of the High King of Heaven as our Lord and Savior who pulls us from the grasps of sin and death. The dragon will not overcome the church even though he pursues us greatly because our security remains with Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who stands at the throne of Heaven.

Willing To Die For Our Faith

In Revelation 13:7, God gives the dragon the ability to pursue and kill people on the earth. For those who do not receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and whose names have not been written in the book of life, the beast of the sea is given permissions to rule and reign over them. They come under the authority of the beast who falsely points to the dragon as the high king. For those whose faith rests secured in Jesus Christ, the beast is able to conquer and destroy them. For many chapters previous, we have seen the people of God be an immunity from the persecutions of the saints. Yet, here, God grants the beast permission to kill the believers. Throughout this process, while

things may seem difficult to endure from an earthly sense, God will still receive the glory from every event that occurs. The sovereignty of God is not diminished during times of difficulty or trial, nor should we think that something so trivial as death can separate us from the God who conquered death itself.

A couple vital things should be observed from the the appearance of the beast. First, no authority is given to the beast except that which God allows. There is nothing that the beast, the dragon or the forces of nature can do that will be able to overcome God. Nothing they can do will be a surprise to God or will require God to change or alter his plans in reaction to the beast. God is fully sovereign and fully King. At the end of time, all things will bow before God either by choice or by submission. The Gospel gives all persons the ability to not be fooled by the elusive charm of the beast and set their eyes on the true Savior. Second, there will be a time when followers of Jesus Christ may be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice for their faith by offering up their lives. Think of the martyrs throughout history who have calmly stepped forward to die for their faith. At the core they understood that it is better to die for Jesus Christ than to live without Him. When Christ conquered death, He secured our resurrection and our home in eternity. Death cannot permanently hold down those whose name is written in the book of life and death. Nothing the beast does to the individual will unseat a person's standing with God. Therefore, as God pours out the judgment on the earth, the church can stand confident in our standing with Jesus Christ. We do not need to fear death as Christ has already conquered death itself.

Discussion Questions

- Describe the characteristics of the beast. How does this beast present himself as a false savior? How is the beast similar to Jesus Christ and how is the beast different?
- What do you think is the appeal of beast? Why are people drawn to him and why do they follow him?
- How should we respond to blasphemy against God? What is the church's role when people speak against God?
- This chapter is one of the first times when we hear of the book of life. What security is there in having your name written in the book of life? What does it mean to have your name in this book?
- Where does our strength to endure the persecutions of the beast? How does our faith help us during these times?
- Have you ever thought about dying for your faith? What are the things you find difficult to give up for your faith? Would you be willing to die for your faith?