

The Wild Beast from The Earth
Chapter 13:11-18

Verse 11

John's vision now encompasses "another beast." The source of this beast is not the sea, but the earth. This beast receives the paradoxical description of a lamb with the voice as of a dragon (the Greek word is *hōs* - like or as). This beast looks like a lamb and talks like a dragon!

Verse 12

This second beast gets his authority and power from the beast of vs. 1-10. The first beast received his authority, power, and throne from the dragon. Now, this second beast uses power mediated through the first beast. Here we have the trinity of evil! This beast is a henchman of the first sinister figure of darkness.

Verse 13

The extent of the power of the second beast is made crystal clear by John. "And he does (*poiei* - neut. or masc.) great signs (*sēmeia* - is one of three general New Testament words for miracles) in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) he even makes fire to come down out of heaven onto the earth before (*enōpion* - in front of) men." That the evil beast has superhuman powers is emphatically declared here. Still today men claim the power to perform miracles. Their message is not in harmony with the word of God, so we can be certain that God is not the source of their power.

Verse 14

What is the result of these great signs? "And he deceives (*plana* - pres. ind. act. can also be pres. subj. act., but context calls for active voice) the ones dwelling on the earth because (*dia* - causal force - the cause of the deception was the signs of miracles) of the signs which it was given (pass. voice) to him to do before the beast; telling to the ones dwelling on the earth to make an image (*eikona* - means a likeness) to the beast."

Verse 15

The might of this beast was so great that he breathed life into the image mentioned in vs. 14. The phrase "the image of

the beast" is used ten times in *The Revelation*; 4 times in chap. 13, and 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4. The power was given (passive voice) to the beast "in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) as many as might not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Since no Christian could committ such an idolatrous act, it signed the potential death warrant of every one claiming Christ as Lord and Savior.

Verse 16

The beast "keeps on making" (*poiei* - pres. act. ind.) the whole world receive a mark of identification. John's words are very clear when he says - "they should give to them a mark (*charagma* - is the official seal) on their right hand or on their forehead,"

Note: Paul used the word *stigmata* in Galatians 6:17 when speaking of the branding of Christ. (See H. N. Ridderbos, *Epistle to the Galatians* in the *New International Commentary of the New Testament*, Wm. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1953, see especially page 228.)

For the fundamental philological study of *stigmata*, see Deissmann, sec. ed., *Biblical Studies*, T. & T. Clark, 1901, pp. 349-360.

Verse 17

What was the significance of the mark of the beast? Socially and economically it was absolutely essential for a persons' well being and livelihood. John declares that "no one could (*dunetai* - the word for capacity or ability - no one was able to) buy or sell except the one having the mark or (there is no *ē* or *here* but is inserted for sense) the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Unless one was socially acceptable one could neither buy food, household needs, etc., nor sell his products of the field or labor. The union of the emperior cult had every source of income and outgo under its full control! A faithful Christian could not possibly exist under those conditions for very long.

Verse 18

John directs attention to the challenge which follows immediately upon the heels of "Here" is wisdom." The one having reason (*noun* - also means understanding or comprehension) let him count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." Much has been written on this cryptogram, but all that can be stated for

certain is just what the text declares - that it is a man. There is a textual problem here regarding the specific number which we cannot here consider. (See appendix immediately following chapter 13 for brief discussion of the Anti-Christ.)

Note: For those interested in the various efforts to identify this number with some specific person see, Swete, *op cit.*, pp. 175; Charles, *op cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 364; Joseph Bonsirven, S. J., *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, Beauchesne et ses fils a paris, 1951, pp. 232.)

Discussion Questions

Chp. 13:1-10

1. Study Daniel chp. 7:1-8 and return to vs. 1 and discuss.
2. What does the term blasphemy mean - vs. 1? What were some of the names of blasphemy mentioned in vs. 1?
3. What possible purpose could John have had to use the imagery of the bear and lion in vs. 2?
4. Does vs. 3 imply that the realm of evil can also perform miracles as can God?
5. How extensive was the apostasy according to vs. 3?
6. Did the peoples of the earth feel secure while worshipping the beast - vs. 4? Were they sincere?
7. Does it make any difference to God what we think or do or who or how we worship as long as we are sincere and honest with ourselves and others?
8. Who was the source of the beast's authority, crown, and power - vs. 5?
9. Was God's purpose destroyed when the saints were overcome - vs. 7?
10. Was the death of Christ in the plan of God for redemption - vs. 8?
11. Upon what does the patience and faith of the saints depend - vs. 10?

Discussion Questions

Chp. 13:11-18

12. What is the source of the power of the second beast - vs. 12?
13. Discuss contemporary claims to perform miracles - both Roman Catholic and Denominational in view of vs. 13?
14. What is the basic results of the signs of the second beast - vs. 14?

15. What was to be done to all who refused to worship the image - vs. 15?
16. Discuss the social and economic implications of the "mark of the beast" - vs. 17.
17. Though the person of vs. 18 cannot be infallibly identified, what do we know with certainty about this person - just from a study of this passage - without adding any speculation regarding the cryptogram?

Special Study: The Anti-Christ

Most men today deny that evil is sustained and carried on by personal forces which are seeking to dominate the spiritual world. But the Bible emphatically declares that the powers of darkness are personal in nature. We cannot here enter the debate with those who reject this particular biblical doctrine as primitive superstition. Those of us who believe that the scriptures are the Word of God cannot possibly deny a doctrine which our Lord and Savior taught with such penetrating clarity without repudiating His deity and therefore, His saving work on the cross.

We are not going to enter debate here as to whether Paul's "man of Sin," (II Thess. 2:3) or John's "dragon," and "anti-Christ" are to be equated. John uses the term anti-Christ in I John 2:18; 2:22; 4:3; and II John 7. He uses the imagery of the dragon and the two beasts in *The Revelation*. These fulfill the same spiritual function as the anti-Christ in the Epistles of John. Dr. G. Milligan's brief study (mentioned below in the note) is a distinct outline of the doctrine of anti-Christ. He traces the doctrine through the O.T. in general and specifically the apocalyptic sections of Daniel, Ezekiel, *et al.*, through the extra biblical Jewish literature, our Lord's teaching on the subject in the great eschatological discourses (Mk. 13:1ff; Matt. 24:1ff) and finally Paul and John's doctrine of the anti-Christian forces at work in the universe.

John's description without question covered the Roman Emperor cult, but his description is applicable wherever and whenever evil forces gain the upper hand in the world. Study and compare the following passages from John and Paul (Revelation 12:9, 13:1f, II Thess. 2:9f; Rev. 13:3ff, 14:11). Discuss these passages (also II Thess. 2:4, 9-12.) in view of the great evil which is now present in the world. The anti-Christian