

Antichrist: the Beast from the Sea (Rev 13)

Revelation

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Well, when you celebrate 20 years, you want to make sure you have a sermon on the Antichrist so turn to Revelation 13, the Scripture reading there. Yeah, God's got a sense of humor.

In our study of the book of Revelation, at the end of chapter 12, what we saw was that the remnant of Israel because the book of Revelation is about Israel, Israel has been put on hold in our day until the full number of Gentiles comes forth, we read that in Romans 11, and when the full number of Gentiles comes in, God goes back and finishes what he started with the nation of Israel. The last seven years of humanity on this present earth is for Israel. It begins when a treaty is written and put together with the world leader at that time and the leaders from the nation of Israel. And they rebuild their temple and in the middle of that time period, we read this in Daniel 9:27, in the middle of that time period that man we know as the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel, whereas they were free to worship as they saw fit, after 3 ½ years they need to leave town if they want to live. And God prepares them a place, we read about that last week in chapter 12, he prepares a place for them in the wilderness to hide for 3 ½ years. And when the dragon sees that he has no power over them, chapter 12, verse 17, says the dragon was enraged with the woman, that is Israel, and went off to make war with the rest of her children. That will be with all those who haven't fled and all the Gentiles who have come to know Christ during those seven years. That's what it says, those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. The dragon in chapter 12 is told, we are told that this is Satan himself, the devil, and he is persecuting God's people like never before. He has 3 ½ years left in his dispensation of time.

Chapter 13, verse 1, "And the dragon," that is Satan, "stood on the sand of the seashore." He's now been flung to the earth. He has no access to heaven as we saw in chapter 12. And as he's standing on the seashore, you know, there's so much of this that reflects a study of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. Let me preface it real quick. In Daniel 2, Daniel around 550 BC sees visions of the future. He's an Israelite. He's been taken captive by the Babylonians because Israel has not obeyed God's law. Year after year, prophet after prophet have begged them to repent but they've refused to. Daniel is a fine young man, an upstanding young man of royal descent. He's been taken, he's captive in Babylon. He's about 15 years old when he's initially taken captive.

He has a dream, actually Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has a dream and no one can interpret it. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar brought people in and said, "I need for you to tell me my dream and what it means." Now how would you like it if someone, if you were responsible for telling someone their dream? I can't even recount my own dream. Even if I could, I'm not sure I want to tell anybody what it was. They're too stinking weird. He wants from his soothsayers, from the wise men in his kingdom, "Tell me the dream and what it means." And they kept coming to him and they said, "Tell us the dream and we'll tell you what it means." He said, "No, no, no, no. You're going to tell me the dream and what it means." When they can't, he says, "Off with all of them." Daniel is part of this group, "Kill them all, they're worthless to me."

Daniel is not part of this conversation and when he realizes that the death sentence is on him, he asks the executioner, "Why so hasty? Why are we going to die?" The king needs to know what his dream was and its interpretation. Daniel said, "Go tell the king I'll do it." So he does. God gives Daniel Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the interpretation. The interpretation of the dream was this: Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue, a statue with a head of gold, the area here of arms, the midsection was made of silver, I'm sorry, the golden part of this statue represented the kingdom of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, that present kingdom that Daniel was in. The silver part represented the coming kingdom of the Persians, the Medes and the Persians, the Medo-Persian empire. The bowels of bronze represented the coming kingdom of Greece under Alexander the Great. And the legs of iron and the toes of iron and clay represented a fourth kingdom, Rome and its final form, and its final form, a two division form with the 10 toes representing a 10 nation confederacy.

In Daniel 7 he has another dream. Daniel has this dream this time and he sees those four kingdoms, he sees them not as gold, silver, bronze and iron, he sees them as a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a strange looking creature with iron teeth. The strange looking creature with iron teeth has seven heads and 10 horns, and on these horns are crowns, actually I probably got it messed up, seven heads each have a crown. And on the 10 horns, one horn comes up out of the 10, it uproots three with it and it's a man. He calls it this little horn, this Antichrist figure that Daniel sees in 550 BC. And he asks God what it means. He said, "There will be a kingdom that comes that will devour the world." Rome did not devour the world. It's a final form of the final kingdom led by a united government. We live in that day now. We live currently in a day where that old empire pretty much represents the world. What's coming is a one world government, and what follows that is a 10 nation confederacy, and what follows that is the Antichrist stage. When we get to Revelation 13 as we are today, we're in the fourth empire of its fifth stage, the Antichrist stage, and John is seeing essentially the same thing Daniel saw 500 plus years prior.

As the dragon, Satan, stands on the seashore, he says he "saw a beast coming up out of the sea." This will be distinguished from the beast he sees coming up out of the earth in our text next week beginning in verse 11. This beast coming up out of the sea, this is the beast. It what we know the Antichrist whom Paul calls in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 and 3, and

for the man of lawlessness. The Antichrist, he sees him coming up out of the sea. Does he come up out of the literal water? In John's vision he most likely does. What is the sea? Daniel saw the same sea. He saw the four kingdoms coming up out of the great sea. Is that the Mediterranean Sea? It's most likely the sea of peoples, the sea of the Gentiles. The sea of peoples is what he sees this beast coming out of. Daniel's beast rose up out of that fourth empire which was Rome. It's not going to come from Israel.

He sees it rise up out of the sea having ten horns," we'll see what these ten horns and seven heads mean when we get more of it when we get to chapter 17. Ten horns. Horns in the Bible, by the way, are indicative of power. If you're a deer hunter, you know this. You shoot a spike, no one cuts off the head of a spike and says, "Check out the spike I got." You shoot a four point, you're not advertising that one either. You get into 8, 10 or 20, as the ones I tend to shoot, [laughter], you are showing off the head of that animal.

Great power in more horns and if you're looking to count those horns and compare them to your hunting mate, you're always looking for that little horn that pops up out of the larger antler. If you could put a ring on it and it stays, then that's considered a horn. My dear is better than yours. Horns are power even in the modern world but in the Old Testament horns speak of power and authority. This beast has 10 horns. This will mimic the 10 toes that Daniel saw in Daniel 2. It will mimic the 10 horns that he saw in Daniel 7. Power. Ten nations or 10, I should say, represents 10 kings and the seven heads on his horns and 10 diadems, that's a crown. It's a strange looking beast that's got seven heads, 10 horns, and on his heads were 10 diadems. They are, note this, "on the heads were blasphemous names." Each head has a name that slanders God. We don't know what those names are but the word "blasphemy" speaks of slander, speaking horrible things of God. In other words, we know that this being, this beast, is anti-God hence he's called Antichrist.

Verse 2, "And the beast which I saw was like a leopard." Well, that's what Daniel saw of the kingdom of Greece in Daniel 7. "And his feet were like those of a bear," that's what he depicted Persia to be like, a bear. "And his mouth like the mouth of a lion," that's what was the depiction of Babylon. So this beast is going to represent the power of ancient Greece, ancient Persia, and ancient Babylon, and the sum total of their power is what's going to come about in this fourth and final form of the fourth kingdom. It's a form of the fourth kingdom. It's not Rome as we know it today. It may not even be Rome as we knew it in the first century, or as it was known in the first century. It will be the sum total of all those powers. That's what the beast is. This is a man. Don't imagine that he, himself, has seven heads and 10 horns. He will probably be a very fine-looking man, a very eloquent speaker with all the power of kingdoms gone before him.

And it says here, "And the dragon gave him his power." Where does he get his power from? Satan. He's a satanically inspired man from the sea. Some have surmised that that sea is the place where the great abyss is. Remember we read about that in chapter 9 with the lid to the abyss is opened up and the demon strange looking characters come out of there and torment unbelievers on the earth for five months. Some surmise that's what John sees.

He comes up out of the sea at the mid point. He's been killed. We're going to see later in this that he's dead at one point and he comes back to life, rising from the dead demonically possessed perhaps. But his power comes from the devil himself. The dragon gave him his power. Note this, "and his throne and great authority." So we see here at least at some level the devil is pulling the strings with this man.

Verse 3, "I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain," as if it had been slain. Now that might lead us to say that maybe it wasn't really slain, it just was as if it had been slain. I propose to you that this man's head was not just as if it had been slain, it had been slain. It's representative of a man that was dead. Let me show you why I think that. Flip back to the left to chapter 5, verse 6. This is speaking of Jesus, the Lamb of God. The same language is used, Revelation 5:6, John says, "And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb," capital "L," speaking of Jesus, "standing, as if slain," same verbiage used for the Lamb of God whom we know was slain on the cross, whom we know died, and we know was resurrected from the dead. That's why I believe when we're in chapter 13 where it says this same one, this beast was "as if slain," I believe he was truly slain which means there's going to be a miracle that happens with his life when he is resurrected.

So this beast, he's satanically inspired with great authority, sitting on a throne over the world. I want you again to imagine this power, this nation, wherever you and I live in the present world, what's coming and what's before us according to Daniel 7 is a one world government, a government that runs the whole world. We're moving towards that. We conservatives in the United States don't want that, at least not in our country, but surprisingly there are many who do. A one world government. What will come out of the one world government will be 10 kings. Will they be the 10 nation confederacy that comes up in Europe? Perhaps. Maybe more perhaps they will be a 10 nation confederacy that wraps around the entire globe. Ten kings ruling every point on the globe but one man will rise up out of that, that Antichrist, that beast who has great authority. He will have dictatorial authority over the entire planet.

One of the heads, by the way, he's the seventh head on those seven heads. "I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound," it doesn't say his seemingly fatal wound, it says his fatal wound. The word "fatal" means what? It means dead.

"I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast." Now it could be that what he sees, the fatal wound is the revived Roman Empire that some great theologians believe. I believe that that's partially true, a great empire revived from the dead, but since we're talking about a man, I believe that it will also be a revived man who is known to be dead, some people believe it's someone from the past like Nero or one of those crazy tyrants from the past. The problem is we wouldn't know it's Nero. We don't even have any pictures of him, right? All you've got to do is say, "Hey, I'm Nero back from the dead." If it were Hitler, as some have said, it'll be Hitler back from the dead or Stalin, well, we've got some photos of them. I don't think that. I think it's a whole new guy in the likeness, in

fact, I think this guy makes Hitler look like a kindergarten teacher. He makes Nero look like a kindergarten teacher. He comes up, the whole earth is amazed and they followed after the beast. So I believe it's an empire and it's a man. The revived form what was fatal in the empire, the empire is now back but it's connected to the man.

Now the world, you figure that's going to make for some good news one day. Maybe the resurrection of this man is seen on tv or Twitter or whatever it may be. We have video footage of this man coming back to life. If that could be proven or shown, people would follow after such a person, wouldn't they? Now that would be intriguing. If you and I didn't have the warning in the Bible, we might follow him too, wouldn't we? That would be a pretty amazing guy. No one has ever done that except, of course, our Lord.

It says the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast. Verse 4, "they worshiped the dragon," that would be the devil, "because he gave his authority to the beast." Apparently the world knows that the dragon is giving this guy his authority. Maybe the dragon to the world in that day will be some Jeff Bezos type character, or a George Soros type character, or a Bill Gates type of character who is giving this world leader his power perhaps with his money. But the world is not only following the beast, they know about the dragon because the authority of the dragon has been given to the beast, "and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?'" The world is going to see this guy's as great a leader as there ever was. Now Satan has always wanted worship. In fact, if you were to read a rendition of his desire in Isaiah 14, he says on a handful of occasions, "I will. I will ascend and be like God. I will. I will. I will." And God says, "No, you won't. No, you won't. No, you won't." And yet for a time he is worshiped like the Most High God just before his end.

The world is going around going, "Who is like the beast? This is the greatest leader we've ever known. Verse 5, "There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months," that's 3 ½ years, "was given to him." I want you to note that verb "was given." Was given. This is a passive form of the verb. It means he didn't go in and take the power, the power was given to him. Of course, we read previously that that power was given to him by the dragon. But I want you to note behind the whole scene God is the one handing out the power. He's always the one in charge, in ultimate control. Mind you, this book is written, if it unfolded today and it was written 2,000 years ago, God telling the future 2,000 years ago. How about that? Think about it for a minute. Wait a minute, why would God let this happen? God's not just going to let it happen, God has ordained that it happen. Why? Because he's bringing Israel back to him in the last seven years of the 70th seven that he gave to Daniel 9. He's working his sovereign and perfect plan out right down to the T. So you might look at this and say why would God do this? Why is God allowing this? God has ordained it. These people certainly weren't born when John wrote it, they may not even be born today. Some surmise that this man, the beast, the Antichrist, is on the earth today. Maybe he's a child. Maybe he's a grown-up. Maybe he knows who he is. Maybe he doesn't.

But note it's God giving him this mouth speaking, the New American Standard says, arrogant words. The Greek text just says one word, megale, which means "big things."

He spoke great things. We love people like that, don't we, people that speak great things, boasting. No, we don't, do we? But the world won't have anything against him. He'll speak big and people will love him. Not only is he speaking big things but also blasphemies. You know, one of the depictions of the Antichrist in Daniel's prophecy is that he speaks against the God of gods. In fact, the Antichrist god, lowercase "g," is the god of fortresses, Daniel 7 and Daniel 11 says. The god of fortresses. In other words, he's a god of war and he thinks very highly of himself, exalting himself. At the midpoint of the tribulation when he breaks his treaty with Israel, he tells the world, "You'll worship me or you'll die." Now if you are a Christian, if you have come to know Christ in those days, if you are Israel having fled, you're not going to do it and you will not take the mark that we'll read about next week that must be on your body to buy and sell. This mark that you must have will show your submission to this beast, and if you don't, he will kill you, and yet God is giving him this authority.

Great things he's been given and he speaks as people who have been given great things, he speaks arrogant things and he blasphemes. It's not just going to be that he uses the Lord's name in vain and a few curse words here and there. It will be the bottom line core of foundation of his reign: hatred for God, foul language against him. Are you offended by that? That's one of the things that I find very offensive. I'll play golf and from time to time we might not be in a foursome and they'll put us together with if I'm with another man or if I'm playing by myself, you're put together with the crowd and, you know, I never go into the issue of, "Hey, I'm Lance Waldie, pastor, Harvest Bible Church." You don't do that, you just kind of let it play out, at least I do, because it changes the foundation of the game and people start cursing and they use terrible language and I let them get away with some of it but every now and again they'll say, "So what is it you do? What do you do?" And I always say, "This is gonna change everything for you. I'm a preacher." And they immediately begin to apologize like they've sinned against me. "I'm so sorry." Hey, look, I'm not sending you to hell. [laughter] But they'll do it, if they use the Lord's name in vain, it's amazing how alert they become to using the Lord's name in vain once they know they're playing with someone who finds that offensive.

Well, that's nothing compared to what this man will do, what he will speak. If you and I are alive, I find very offensive today watching the news and some of the things that our own President says. I'm amazed at the language that's used today that wasn't used in the '80s, '90s, and certainly not prior, at least not on tv. I know the language was there. Today you just say it and it might not get bleeped. The foulness of it, the hatred for life. What was it, Biden has been cast out of the Catholic Church. It doesn't seem to scare him at all for his stance on abortion. It will be that on steroids, as it were.

He will speak blasphemies and his authority to act for 42 months. Well, you know that this isn't just Satan giving him his authority because Satan is not going to limit his authority to 3 ½ years if Satan had ultimate control. But God does and God has said, "You will have this final control for 3 ½ years and then it will be over."

Verse 6, "And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle." By the way, that Greek word is "His dwellingplace, that is, those

who dwell in heaven." So he is blaspheming the very name of God. Well, we hear that all the time, don't we? That's also in mundane tv shows. God's name is just thrown around like a punchline. Do you know that in the Bible in the Old Testament, using the Lord's name in vain was punishable by death? In Leviticus 24 we see a man who is cursing the name of God. Moses brings the guy to God and God says, "Stone him. You cannot use My name, it's a violation of the third commandment," the book of Exodus 20. Also adultery is punishable by death or was in the Old Testament. Today we do it all the time. Well, I can't say "we" but people do it. "We'll live together for a while. We'll sleep together for a while. That's okay, everybody else is doing it." Maybe that was you and you repented of it. God bless you. But don't think you can live like this and somehow be in God's good graces. By his grace he can save you if you repent of such sins. Using the Lord's name in vain, committing adultery, we're all numb to it today, even Christians unfortunately. It will be just a byproduct of how this man speaks and how he lives. And he will blaspheme not only the name of God but his dwellingplace in heaven.

Verse 7, "It was also given to him to make war with the saints," that word for "saints" in the Greek text is "holy ones." Holy ones, that's people who have come to know Christ during the tribulation time period. It was given to him by God, certainly by Satan, to make war with the saints. By this time, folks, all of your guns will have been confiscated, whatever you have, even if you have saved one, buried one in the sand. We'll see as this passage closes, it will do you no good to dig it up and shoot it. The authority is given to him to make war with God's people "and to overcome them." He will win the war. "And authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation," again, "was given to him."

Mind you, we don't live in this time. We can still fight for our freedoms. Here we have a man who will come to power that the world will go after. Something will happen to him. He may be in a war. He comes upon the scene, we saw in Revelation 6:1-2, as this rider on a white horse, coming in peacefully. The world likes him. They love him. They go after him. He brings peace. The world likes him but the earth is opening up and there's all kinds of cosmic disasters because the tribulation has begun, but this man's wrath has not come full force to this point. It doesn't happen until the midpoint. There's all kinds of horrors, a quarter of the world is dead by the time we get to seal number 6, the earthquake, the fourth horseman, pestilence. There was war, famine and pestilence and then there's an earthquake. When this man comes to power, he's not making the earth shake, he's going after the people. What people? The people who have made a claim to know and love Christ whom he blasphemes. It was given to him. This is what God has ordained to occur.

Verse 8, "All who dwell on the earth," by the way, when you see the phrase "dwell on the earth" in the book of Revelation, it's always speaking of unbelievers. They're distinguished from those who come to know Christ during the tribulation. I have promoted and because I believe it full-heartedly that the rapture of the church occurs before the events of the Revelation, occurs before the events, I should say, of Revelation 6 where God's people are gone. But God immediately at this point seals 144,000 Israelites, 12,000 from each tribe, that's what chapter 7 tells us if we read it literally. These are the evangelists on the earth and they begin to preach and people come to know

Christ through their preaching, people in Israel and otherwise. We see that by the end of Revelation 7, people from all nations are worshiping Christ.

We see that there are two witnesses, two fiery preachers who rise up. We read about them in Revelation 11. They come and they preach, I think, in Jerusalem. I believe it will be in Jerusalem and they preach for 3 ½ years. You can't bother these guys. If you don't like their preaching, you don't write them an email and say, "Didn't like the way you said that." You can write to your modern pastor that way, although I don't advise it. You say something bad about these guys, they literally have the power to breathe fire into your body and kill you.

God has put preachers on the earth or will put preachers on the earth once the church is raptured, but people come to know Christ and they are distinguished from those who dwell on the earth. Again, verse 8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him," then he makes a caveat because we know Christians aren't going to worship him, it's "everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." So what we learn in verse 8 and we'll see it again in chapter 17, verse 8, in fact, we see it at least seven times, I believe, in the book of Revelation, this book of life. The book of life is a book that God himself wrote before the events of Genesis 1 transpired, before the foundation of the world. God wrote it, probably a boring book if we got to read it today. It's a book full of names. The names of people that God has written in this book are the people that will come to know Christ and prior to Christ they were the ones that will have the faith in God that the Christ is coming, Old Testament saints. We don't know whose names are in there but I can tell you this, if you have trusted in Jesus Christ, your name is in that book. Before you were ever born. He didn't wait for you to be born and say, "What a cute little baby. I love the shape of his head, you know?" In my head, I've seen pictures of my childhood. Heck, I've watched myself grow up into adulthood, who am I kidding? God didn't look at me and say, "What a cute kid." He looked at me and he said, "We need to save this kid. He has no hope," as he did all of us but he did it prior to our birth which means there's nothing we can claim to have done to receive his grace. That's why we worship.

If you follow me on Facebook, I'll post a couple of things here and there but one of the things I saw recently was from D. L. Moody. You probably saw this either from me or someone else and Moody said this back in the 1800s, he said, "I'm really glad that we're saved by grace, by God's grace alone and not by works because if we were saved by works, we'd have to spend eternity in heaven listening to all those people tell us about how they got there." Wouldn't that be the worst? "Let me tell you about how good I was and how I came to know Jesus." We don't have to hear those stories, praise God. The stories in heaven are all going to be about the grace of God because he did it all.

This is the book. Those who worship the beast, the devil, I would even add now, but then are those whose name was not written there, and we know their names are not written there because they're worshiping the beast. Perhaps your life in the past was one where you did worship the devil, maybe you were part of a satanic coven, maybe you were just part of a heretical church, maybe you were an atheist, maybe you didn't care. All of that is

the worship of Satan. Satan wants it, he loves two ways about us: he loves the people that say, "I don't believe any of that whackadoodle stuff, you believe in a devil and demons?" Satan loves those people; he also loves the opposite extreme where people see demons and devils around every corner. Either way, he loves it but what he doesn't love is the orthodox view of the devil himself and that's from the Bible, and what we know from the Bible is that God has written a book, the names of his people, and they're distinguished from those who are not written in that book by who they follow and who they worship, namely Jesus Christ our Lord. If we follow Christ our Lord, we know our names are written in that book, amen?

Some of you have asked me, is it going to be my name now? I mean, is God going to read off Lance Waldie? Well, which one, there's a couple? Maybe it's a name God himself gave us. We read that in the early part in the churches to the book of Revelation where God gives us a new name. I don't know. It's neither here nor there. Whatever your name is, if you're in Christ God knows you. Does he know others that are not in Christ? Well, of course, he knows everyone. His knowledge of his people will be like, I would say in some sense my knowledge of you. My wife and my son, I have some friends down here, some family, my mom and my aunt and uncle, my daughter, I know them. I know them intimately. I know the Wright family. I know the Wright family very well. They're my friends. They really are, I just when you preach, you forget things. You forget the most obvious things. I know them. I know them intimately. Others of you I've met. I've met. I mean, I've just met you. I know your names and I pray for you if I know your names. You're on my prayer list. Some of you I just met today, you're going to be on my prayer list. Wow, great privilege, right, I mention your name in prayer?

There's a difference, though. I know some intimately, I know others' names. God knows all but he knows his people intimately. Intimately. That's like in Matthew 7:21, 22, 23, the end of time when Jesus closes the door to the kingdom, there are people knocking on that door going, "Jesus, let us in. We did this in Your name. We did that in Your name." And Jesus calls out from behind the door and he says, "Depart from Me. I don't know you. I don't know you." And he calls them, "You doers of wickedness." He may know your name, he knows who you are, but he also knows what you do, a doer of wickedness. He knows his own intimately.

This book written from the foundation of the world, this book of life, it's one of a handful of books in the Bible, by the way. The Bible speaks of other books, speaks of a book of tears, there's an entire book of tears spoken of in the Bible. All your tears are recorded, I believe it's Isaiah 56 if I'm not incorrect. There's the book of the living versus the book of life. That's a record of all those who are alive. There's a book of the living today in the record of the county clerk. If you're breathing, you're in the book of the living. When you die, your name will be removed from the book of the living. There's that book in the Bible. There's various books. This is the book of life written from the foundation of the world and he says here in verse 8, those who dwell on the earth, that is, those whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world of the book of the life of the Lamb who was slain, they are the ones worshipping the beast.

Verse 9, "If anyone has an ear, let him hear." If anyone has an ear, let him hear. Interestingly, there's a phrase that's left off of this that's included in Revelation 2 and chapter 3. When Jesus is talking to the churches, if you were with us in that study, we saw that Jesus is speaking to the churches. They were modern churches at that day in the first century yet they represent churches of all history. And he says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit of God says to the churches." Here it's not here. It doesn't say "to the churches." Do you want to know why? Because the book of Revelation is not for the church. The churches are not here. Oh, there are people coming to know Christ but they're not the church. We might call them tribulation saints, people that come to know Christ during the tribulation, but the church is gone, it's been raptured.

If you have an ear, listen. There's some application on that for us today, is there not? A text on the coming Antichrist and the world that he will rule, it's frightening. We already live in a world none of us are real happy with, and we don't like where it's potentially going. I don't. It's going to be so bad then. If you have an ear, let him hear. Here's what's coming. Warn your friends. Warn your family members. I have a policy here, we have a policy, the elders of this church have a policy that when you become a member of the church, you write out your testimony, you tell us how you came to know Christ. Here's who I was before I came to know Christ. Here's the circumstances under which I came to know Christ. Here's what my life has been since I've known Christ. Some of you take that very seriously and I love that. I mean, you share the gospel with me in the fourth paragraph using Scripture, here's what it means to know Christ. And when you die, heaven forbid, we're all going to die, when you die, I get the privilege or someone will have the privilege of reading your testimony to the people who come to your funeral. Some people have written such a wonderful testimony, I have been up here reading it, reading the testimony that's so harsh, so to the point that I have to come up for air and stop and say, "By the way, folks, this is what John wrote." I had a guy in our church years ago whose name was John. John committed suicide. He was a very depressed man but he had come to know Christ and his testimony spoke to his parents because he knew they weren't believers. He knew his friends weren't believers and the gospel was preached and he was dead. Folks, write your testimony in such a way that when you die it still speaks. Live your life now that when you die your life, the way you lived it still speaks when you're dead, so that people with ears, let them hear. Let them see.

Then he says in verse 10, he closes it by saying, "If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes." Literally the Greek text says if anyone for captivity, to captivity. Next phrase in the New American Standard Bible is going to be different than your ESV or NIV or NET. The NASB says, "if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed." Kind of a lex talionis there, eye for an eye thing. There are 12 different versions of this in the Greek texts and what that tells us is that the original was difficult for the scribes to make out. So it's either if anyone kills with the sword, then with the sword he will be killed, as the New American Standard Bible says, or if anyone is destined to be killed by the sword, with the sword he must be killed. That's what your ESV or your NET and your NLT will say. So which is it? I don't know but both work. Essentially what's happening, God is saying, "I have ordained that the Antichrist will reign in this reign of terror for 42 months." No revolution of rednecks having dug up a box of guns with ammo

is going to stop him. God is saying in that time period, not today but in that time period, "What I have ordained that the Antichrist do, he will do." And if you as Christians are destined to be arrested, you're going to be arrested. If you as Christians are destined to die by the sword, you're going to die by the sword. You can't do anything about it.

Now again, that doesn't apply today. I'm not the kind of preacher that gets up and says that we're going to take up arms and we're going to revolt and have another Civil War here to make sure our country is what it once was. That's not for me to say, yet that could be promoted in a church today. In the tribulation, don't even bother. What's going to happen is going to happen. Again, we see God in his sovereignty. He's now predicted it, he's ordained the future, "Here's the way it's going to unfold. It's going to unfold this way. There's going to be a world leader that rises up. There's going to be a peace treaty in Israel. There's going to be peace in the Middle East. It is going to be signed that it be for seven years but it's only going to last for 3 ½ years, and during that 3 ½ years, the earth is going to be doing some amazingly horrible things. There's going to be wars. There's going to be famine. There's going to be pestilences." The coronavirus is going to be the least of our problems in that day and age. People will die. There will be no vaccines. They will die left and right, entire half of the population will be dead. Billions of people will be dead. At the midpoint of the tribulation, the wrath of Satan and his Antichrist will rule the earth and there's nothing anyone on the earth can do about it except hide.

Biff preached a sermon two weeks ago talking about that time. It talked about those who when Jesus returns God separates, Jesus separates those who are left, there will be people that live through that seven year tribulation, those who are left he will separate them as a shepherd separates sheep from the goats. The sheep are God's children, they're the Christians that endure and live to the end. The goats are all those who worship the beast and who lived. Those who worship the beast as the goats will be sent away. Why? Because God runs, Jesus runs off and he says, "Look, I was in prison and you didn't help Me. I was naked and you didn't clothe Me. I was hungry and you didn't feed Me. I was thirsty and you didn't give Me a drink." And they're going to say, "What are You talking about?" And he's going to tell them, "For all those people you didn't help, you didn't help Me."

During the tribulation will there be plenty of people to help? If your plan is to build an underground bunker and to hide out with your military style food in the packets, beware. You will be judged as a goat. If you are in the tribulation and you are not trying to help people instead of hiding out in an underground bunker, you will be labeled with the goats. It will be a time where people need help more than at any other time in the history of the world but that's not where you're going to be, is it? When you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, we miss all of this, the tribulation is not for God's people. Why would it be? And yet people come to know Christ in the tribulation and they endure it. Why? Well, that's easy, they didn't profess Christ in the here and now and they don't get to suffer like you and I do in the here and now as Christians, so God brings them up to speed during the tribulation. You can't be a Christian and not suffer a bit. And isn't it beautiful to think the people that will come to know Christ, you know people today that blaspheme the name of Jesus, we know people today who hate God. Think of Bill Maher, you know, the

talk show host. He hates Jesus. He loathes God. He will blaspheme God's name. Politically he has some decent views from time to time if you listen to him, but he's a blasphemer. Men like that, people like that if the rapture were to occur today, those are the people that may be coming to Christ in the tribulation and they will need to suffer for their hypocrisy. What they once didn't believe and what they now do believe, the tribulation is for them. They may die the first day, they may endure to the end and be separated with the sheep and the goats, but note this, folks, salvation in the Bible is always the same, it comes through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are not to sit back and dwell on the Antichrist and try to figure out who he is. Don't waste your time. You might look around and say, "That guy might be. We need to follow some stories about...." Don't waste your time. Better yet, read God's word. Read about the Christ. The Christ saves us from all of these horrors, amen? I hate to go away with the thought of the Antichrist. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for our sins. Believe in him. Repent of your sins and, what, class? You shall be saved.

Let's pray.

Lord, thank You for the good news, the gospel that's so well at the end of a horrible passage. It fits very well with the end of a beautiful passage. The gospel is beautiful no matter where it's spoken, no matter when it's lived out. May we be among those people who know the truth, who believe the truth, and who live the truth. May we be thinking of someone in our own minds that we believe would live through these horrible events and may we give the gospel to them again, trusting in You, Your salvation and Your sovereignty, that You would even work through us to speak it, to live it. It's Your job to save. May we be about the task of living out the gospel and speaking it. Thank You, Lord, for such a privilege and, Lord, I pray on behalf of everyone here, thy kingdom come. Send Your kingdom today. Let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May Your kingdom come. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

You've been listening to a sermon by Dr. Lance Waldie, Senior Pastor of Harvest Bible Church in Cypress, Texas.



Antichrist: the Beast from the Sea

Revelation 13:1-10

- 1) A man bringing temporary, false peace to the world (13:1-8)
 - a) A Gentile, from the sea of peoples (1)
 - b) His power in line w/ predecessors (1)
 - c) Exercising great authority; offensive names (1)
 - d) Satanically controlled; mimicking past nations (2)
 - e) Worshiped by all unbelievers (3-4, 8a)
 - f) Slandering God; claiming to be a god (5-6)
 - g) God-given authority to persecute saints (7)
- 2) God's people must take heed of future events (8b-10)
 - a) Their names are written in Book of Life
 - b) They hear & heed God's words
 - c) They persevere to the end
- 3) Daniel's prophecies (Dan. 2 & 7) compared to Book of Revelation
 - a) Three kingdoms: Babylon (612-539 BC), Medo-Persia (559-334), Greece (334-63 BC)
 - b) A fourth kingdom: Rome/Imperialism (63 BC to ???)
 - i) Legs of iron; toes mixed w/ iron & clay (Dan. 2)
 - ii) Dreadful creature w/ iron teeth (Dan. 7)
 - (1) United stage (Rome)
 - (2) Divided stage (two legs)
 - (3) One world govt. stage
 - (4) Ten nation stage (toes/horns)
 - (5) Antichrist stage (little horn)