

Revelation 13: 1-5; “The Beast Rising out of the Sea” (Part 2),
Sermon # 90 in the series – “The Faithful and True Witness”.
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 6th, 2008,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

When I spoke to you a month ago from this text, I was only able to get through the first point of three points in relation to this subject of the Beast rising out of the Sea. My proposition to you in that sermon was this. It is very important to the forward progress of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ that all true Christians understand the identity of this Beast rising up out of the sea for it is the greatest strategy of Satan to attempt to blockade the gospel of our Lord from reaching and conquering the nations of the world. This beast, we have seen, comes out of the sea. This false church was formed out the political commotions which surrounded the dissolution of the Pagan Roman Empire. The sea is a picture of the political environment. The land is a picture of the Ecclesiastical or Church environment. We have seen that this beast has seven heads and ten horns and on the horns are ten crowns. This, in the past, was the political power base of Roman Catholicism and in some ways it still is today. Europe was the place where the gospel spread and was successful after the days of Pagan Roman Empire. Kings and kingdoms supported the Pope, and the false doctrines of a sacramental religion came to replace the true gospel in many churches from the years 323 A.D. to 756 A.D. Then when the papacy truly came into temporal power, the persecution of true Christians came to be a policy which was supported by many kings in many places in Europe. This is what we want to look at this afternoon more closely.

Every Christian can, and I believe should, come humbly to the revelation of this truth of the identity of the Beast by a careful study of this passage of Scripture and then compare it with history. This beast, who has been revealed in this passage of Scripture and in history can be identified by 3 three-fold descriptions. 1st of all - It can be identified by his heads and horns and crowns. (Verse 1) 2nd - It can be identified by what he is like; a leopard, a bear, and a lion. (Verse 2) And 3rd- This beast can be identified by what the Dragon gave him; his power, his throne, and his great authority. (Verses 2b - 5) This afternoon I want to look at the 2nd of the 3-fold descriptions again, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and verify what we are looking at from the history of the Church as well.

The question we are asking this afternoon is, “Why is the Beast rising up from the Sea compared to a leopard, a bear, and a lion?” Bishop Thomas Newton has well said, “As Daniel’s fourth beast was without a name, and devoured and broke in pieces the three former: so this beast is also without a name, and partakes of the nature and qualities of the three former, having the body of a leopard which was the third beast or Grecian Empire, and the feet of a bear, which was the second or Persian empire, and the mouth of a lion, which was the first beast or the Babylonian Empire.” Let’s take each of these word pictures and make a point of it.

Why is the Beast rising out of the Sea compared to a Leopard?

We must remember back to our study of Chapter 12 and the signs in heaven. One of those signs was a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his heads. We saw that that the dragon was the strategy of the devil using the Pagan Roman empire to destroy the Church by means of open persecution. In Chapter 12, verses 7-9, when war broke out in this “heaven”, the great dragon was cast down from the political realm of dominance. But this did not stop the Devil. It says there, “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” He had to re-think his strategy of how to destroy the church. He was now forced to focus all of his attention upon how he could deceive the whole world through the visible Church itself. What he did what to take all the major characteristics of conquerors

from the great World Monarchies of old, and use them from the vantage point of the Papal power working in connection with the kings of Europe to advance his cause of destroying the truth and those who held it.

The characteristic of the leopard is mentioned first. The beast's body was like a leopard's body. Turn with me to Daniel 7: 6. Here in this vision which was given to Daniel, he sees four great beasts coming up from the sea, each different from the other. We have already seen that the fourth beast is Rome and the third which was like a leopard represented the Grecian World Monarchy. In verse 6 it says, "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird." The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it." This is referring to the conquests of Alexander the Great and the power to rule devolving upon 4 of his generals upon his sudden death at the age of 33. Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), was the king of Macedonia that conquered the Persian empire and annexed it to Macedonia, and he is considered one of the greatest military geniuses of all times. He is the first king to be called "the Great". He defeated King Darius the Mede who had a force of over 600,000 men with 30,000 troops in one of the greatest battles in history. He loved glory and valor and because of it he raced (or rather, like a bird he flew) through the then known world from Macedonia to India conquering everything and everybody by amazing military exploits.

This is not to say that he did not have many sins. The Lord was not pleased with him personally. But He granted him his great abilities and providentially ordained his conquests. Similarly the Antichristian beast, headed by Popes who loved greatness and valor spiritually went forth to conquer the 10 kingdoms of what became Europe. Calvin says, "Alexander was content with fame alone; he granted liberty to all people; and as long as they flattered him, he sought nothing else." So too, the Papal power was a power to be flattered by worldly men and which flattered great military men and kings according to its own design which was to bring the nations under its Ecclesiastical reign. The whole design, the whole strategy of Satan in the raising up of the Antichristian system was to have an Ecclesiastical ruler, the Pope, having influence upon nations and Kings as his political arm; to do his bidding in relation to the persecution of true Christians and thus confuse and slow down, and destroy if possible, the forward progress of the gospel. It was Satan's answer to Constantine and the joining together of Church and state to protect Christians. It is still the case today as far as the Evil One can push it.

In the beginning of the third time period of Church History, we see a very swift move on the part of the Papacy to establish itself among the 10 kingdoms of the fallen Roman Empire. I have mentioned to you in the past about King Pepin of France and how he gave to Pope Zachary three parcels of land that began the establishment of the Pope's temporal power. I have never told you of how this man came to be king. Because this one story will portray for us quite a picture of the beast as a leopard. Pepin is much like Alexander the Great. He swiftly seized every opportunity to advance his own kingdom and in the process he ended up establishing the authority and the temporal power of the Pope. In Miller's History of the Church we read; "In the year 752 Pepin, who was high steward or mayor of the palace to Childeric III, King of the Franks, had long exercised all the powers of the State together with all the attributes of sovereignty excepting the title; he thought that the time was now come to put an end to the pageant royalty of his master, and assume the kingly name and honors. He possessed in full measure all the qualities which the nobility and people were accustomed to respect at that period in princes. He was a gallant warrior and an experienced statesman. By a brilliant series of successes he had greatly extended the dominion of the Franks.

The poor king being destitute of such abilities, sank in popular favor, and was surnamed the Stupid. Pepin, however, had the wisdom to proceed cautiously at this stage of his plans. Boniface, who played an important part in this matter, was secretly dispatched to Rome to prepare the pope for Pepin's message, and with instructions how to answer it. In the meantime

he assembled the states of the realm to deliberate on the subject. The nobles gave it as their opinion, that first of all the pontiff should be consulted, whether it would be lawful to do what the mayor desired. Accordingly two confidential ecclesiastics were sent to Rome to propose the following question to Pope Zachary — *“Whether the divine law did not permit a valiant and warlike people to dethrone an imbecile and indolent monarch, who was incapable of discharging any of the functions of royalty, and to substitute in his place one more worthy of rule, and one who had already rendered most important service to the state?”* The laconic answer of the pope — already in possession of all the secrets — was prompt and favorable. *“He who lawfully possesses the royal power may also lawfully assume the royal title.”* The pope no doubt replied as his questioners desired. Pepin now felt secure of his prize. Fortified by the approval of the highest ecclesiastical authority, and assured of the acquiescence of the people, he boldly assumed the royal title. He was crowned by Boniface, in the presence of the assembled nobles and prelates of the realm, at Soissons, A.D. 752.

But the religious character of the coronation marked the growing power of the clergy. The Jewish ceremony of anointing was introduced by Boniface to sanctify the usurper; and the bishops stood around the throne as of equal rank with the armed nobles. According to the usage of the Franks, Pepin was elevated on the shield, amid the acclamations of the people, and proclaimed king of the Franks. Childeric, the last of the Merovingian kings, was stripped of royalty without opposition, shorn of his long hair, tonsured, and shut up in a monastery. The violation of the sacred rights of kings, the great law of hereditary succession, the rebellious ambition of a servant, the degradation of a lawful sovereign, absolving subjects from their allegiance, are here sanctioned by the papacy as right in the sight of God, provided they are the means of raising the pope to temporal sovereignty. Such was the daring wickedness and awful blasphemy of the Roman See in the middle of the eighth century.”

“Let the student of church history note this occurrence as characteristic of the papacy, and as a precedent for its future pretensions. It is generally related as the first instance of the pope’s interference with the rights of princes and the allegiance of subjects. But the successors of Pope Zachary made ample use of the precedent in after years. They asserted that the kings of France, from this time, held their crown only by the authority of the pope, and that the papal sanction was their only legal title. Little did either Pepin or Zachary foresee the immense effects of this one negotiation on the history of the church and the world. It was the first great step towards the future kingdom of the bishop of Rome — the important link in the chain of events.” I would say that this is a good description of the Leopard; an ambitious man who usurps the power and authority of his King and sets himself up as king. This is not true Christianity. This is something very wrong and very false. The kingdom of God is not advanced by selfish ambition, cunning, and scheming. Its emblem is not the Leopard, but the Lamb.

2nd - Why is the Beast of the Sea said to have the feet of a Bear?

The kingdom of the Bear among the World Monarchies was the Medo-Persian Empire. The man who greatly stands out in this regard is Cyrus. The Medes and Persians were not a very refined people. They were very fierce and cruel people in their warfare. When we turn back to Daniel 7, we find the second World Monarchy spoken of is a bear-like beast. And the description certainly is one of cruelty. Verse 5 says, “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear.” “It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth.” “And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’” This refers to the great numbers of persons who were killed in the slaughters and battles which brought the then known world to Cyrus’ feet. This man, although he did give help to Israel when they came back from the Babylonian captivity and issued a decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, nevertheless was a man who shed a great amount of blood in achieving his conquest of the world.

There is indeed, a spiritual likeness to be found in the conquests of Charlemagne, the King of France, the son of Pepin who we just studied. Reading once again from Miller's History of the

Church, he says: “The professed object of Charlemagne was to establish Christianity in the remote parts of Germany, but it must ever be regretted that he used such violent means to accomplish his end. Thousands were forced into the waters of baptism to escape a cruel death. The sword or baptism were the conqueror’s terms. A law was enacted which denounced the penalty of death against the refusal of baptism. He could offer no terms of peace, enter into no treaty, of which baptism should not be the principal condition. Conversion or extermination was the watchword of the Franks. And though the old religion might sit loosely enough on the conscience of the Saxon, he could see nothing better in the new; for to his mind baptism was identified with slavery, and Christianity with subjugation to a foreign yoke. To submit to baptism was to renounce, not only his old religion, but his personal freedom. With such anti-Christian, such inhuman, feelings the war was carried on, as we have said, for thirty-three years.”

“At the head of his superior armies he oppressed the savage tribes, who were incapable of confederating for their common safety; nor did he ever, it is said, encounter an equal antagonist in numbers, in discipline, or in arms. But after a struggle of incalculable bloodshed, and of almost unexampled obstinacy and duration, the numbers, the discipline, and the valor of the Franks prevailed at length over the undisciplined and desultory efforts of the Saxons. “The remnant of thirty campaigns of undistinguished slaughter,” says Greenwood, “and wholesale expatriation, accepted baptism, and became permanently incorporated with the empire of the Franks and Christianity. Abbeys, monasteries, and religious houses of all descriptions sprang up in every part of the conquered territory, and the new churches were supplied with ministers from the school of Boniface — a school which admitted no distinction between the law of Christ and the law of Rome.” Baptism was the only security and pledge of peace which the Franks would accept for the submission of the Saxons. And thus it was — how sad and humbling to relate! — when the conquest was complete, and the carnage over, the priests entered the field. Their office was to baptize the vanquished. Thousands of the barbarians were thus forced, at the point of the sword, into what the priests called the regenerating waters of baptism.”

“But to the Saxons their baptism meant neither more nor less than the renunciation of their religion and their liberty. The consequence was, that no sooner were the armies of Charles withdrawn, than the indefatigable Saxons rose again, and burst through the encroaching limits of the empire, ravaging as they went. In their burning rage and bitter revenge they hewed down crosses, burnt churches, destroyed monasteries, slaughtered their inmates, respected neither age nor sex, until the whole country seemed wrapped in flames and deluged with blood. Such revolts, it is said, were often provoked by the insolent language, and still more by the offensive demeanor of the missionary monks, and the severe avarice with which they exacted their tithes. But such outbursts, on the part of the Saxons, were followed by a fresh invasion and a merciless slaughter by the Franks, until tribe after tribe yielded to the conquering arms of Charlemagne. On one occasion after a severe revolt Charles massacred 4,500 brave warriors in cold blood who had surrendered. This cruel and cowardly abuse of power leaves a dark, an indelible stain on his history, which no apology can ever remove.”

“Even the skeptic historian alludes to it in a most truthful and touching way.” “In a day of equal retribution,” he says, “the sons of his brother Carloman, the Merovingian prince of Aquitaine, and the four thousand five hundred Saxons who were beheaded on the same spot, would have something to allege against the justice and humanity of Charlemagne. His treatment of the vanquished Saxons was an abuse of the right of conquest.” And my brethren, as we hear these things we must understand that this was something of the bearish character of the Antichristian beast, being egged on to these merciless slaughters and false conversions and baptisms by the false teaching and false authority of the Popes of that day. He has the feet of a bear trampling down the mercy, truth, and grace of Almighty God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the 2nd description of likeness in the Beast rising out of the Sea.

3rd - Why does the Beast out of the sea have a mouth like the mouth of a lion?

It is because a lion roars greatly; he strikes fear into those whom he is about to tear apart and devour. In Daniel 7: 7 it says, "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong." "It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet." "It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns." It was different in that it was a professedly Christian Beast. But let me continue: "I was considering the horns and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them before whom three horns were plucked out by the roots." "And there, in this horn, were the eyes of a man, and mouth speaking pompous words." There you have it. A beast roaring out its false Christianity in military conquests and a man with a mouth speaking pompous words. Verse 5 of our text says of the beast, "And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. How horrible is the plan and power of Satan. But our God's plan and His power are infinitely greater.