Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Beast Out of the Sea, Part 2
Scripture: Revelation 13:1-4
Code: 66-45

Tonight we go back to our study of the book of Revelation and again to chapter 13. The beast out of the sea occupies the first half of this chapter, verses 1 through 10. This is the second in our series as we look at this very, very interesting text.

The world certainly is looking for a leader. We have such high hopes that maybe the next President, maybe the next Prime Minister, maybe the next authority, monarch, ruler somewhere in the world is going to rise to solve our problems, massive as they are. The world is hoping that somebody might come along and unite all nations, somebody who could give hope in the midst of hopelessness, somebody who could provide a sense of security in the midst of a time of fear.

The world is looking for just such a man. And the fact is, such a man is coming. Satan is going to design him. Satan is going to possess him. And he's going to be everything the world thinks its looking for, he's going to rise to authority like no one has ever had in the history of humanity. He's going to be all that people could have hoped and imagined a man could be. He will even bring worldwide peace and prosperity. But he will be satanic to the very heart.

Actually this man who is to come will not be a solitary figure, that is he is not alone. There will be, there have been and there are others quite like him. The fact of the matter is, Jesus said and Mark recorded it in chapter 13 verse 6, "Many will come in My name saying, `I am He,' and will mislead many." John said, "Already the spirit of Antichrist is in the world." And Jesus said, "In the future time as you move closer to My return, many are going to come and say I am the Messiah, I am the one you've been looking for." Later in that same thirteenth chapter of Mark, Jesus is recorded to have said, "If anyone says to you, `Behold, here is the Christ,' or, `Behold He is there,' do not believe him for false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show signs and wonders in order if possible to lead the elect astray."

As we get closer and closer to the end, I believe there will be a proliferation of satanic leaders, satanic impostors, pseudochrists and antichrists. But one of them will be the culmination of all the others. And so I say again, he is not a solitary figure in the sense that he alone plays this role, he is simply the consummate Antichrist. He is the embodiment of all the satanic power in one incredible display, one final man just prior to Christ's return to set up His kingdom on earth. We've been learning that this man will arrive in a period of time known as the Tribulation, the final seven-year period just prior to the return of Christ. In fact, he really begins his reign of terror at the midpoint of

that seven years and for the final three and a half years he takes over the world and pours out the very anger of Satan against the Jews and all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The resulting horror, the resulting devastation and destruction is indescribable.

And so it is in the time of the Tribulation that Satan selects his leader and empowers him from the abyss with some demon spirit to take over the world for Satan. And the effort, of course, is to prevent Christ from reigning. The effort is to destroy all the Jews so they can't come to Christ and have a kingdom. The effort is to massacre all who believe and therefore there will be none remaining in the world to have as subjects in the kingdom He brings. We like to think and hope and rejoice in the coming of Christ, but before He comes Antichrist is coming and with him the most frightening reign of terror the world has ever known.

Now I reminded you last week that this is not new to believers. This is not something God's people are just finding out. Even when the book of Revelation was written in about 96 A.D. at the end of the first century, thirty years or so after most of the rest of the epistles were written, though it was so much later and though here you have this explicit portrayal of Antichrist in chapter 13, this is not new. Already Daniel wrote very much about the Antichrist in chapter 2, chapter 7, chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 11 of his Old Testament prophecy. Jesus certainly commented on Antichrist as He affirmed Daniel's description of the abomination of desolation which the Antichrist will perpetrate. Paul then gave us further insight in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 which was one of the earliest of the New Testament epistles. And John himself writing in 1 John chapter 2 discusses the reality of the Antichrist's spirit which is in the world.

Even in the book of Revelation, chapter 13 is not the first mention of the Antichrist. We find him first mentioned in chapter 6 as the rider on a white horse who comes to conquer. We find him again mentioned in chapter 11 and verse 7 and there he is called the beast which comes out of the abyss which is how he is described here also in chapter 13. So the Antichrist's spirit, the satanic efforts to destroy Christ have always been at work. In fact, chapter 12 of Revelation described that whole Antichrist movement from its very beginnings, but now in chapter 13 we come to the final expression of the Antichrist's attitude in Satan's superman, this amazing intellectual genius, this outstanding orator, this master politician, this commercial wizard, this military mastermind this power unequalled, this great religious leader who himself claims to be God, the most incredible leader ever. We find him detailed for us in an amazing portrait that is very consistent with the words of Daniel, the words of Paul and the earlier description of John in the very same book of Revelation.

Without begging the point, just to remind you and for those who weren't here, he is Satan's supreme human instrument to destroy Israel, to prevent her salvation and kingdom, to kill believers, to conquer the world and to defeat Christ so that Satan can get what he wants, and that is to rule as God.

Now as we look at chapter 13 we meet the last evil world dictator. First of all, we look at his ancestry in verse 1. Let's just review it briefly. "He stood on the sand of the seashore and I saw a beast coming out of the sea having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems and on his heads were blasphemous names."

Just to note, some of your Bibles, if you have a King James, an Authorized Version may say, "And I stood on the sand of the seashore." Some of the ancient manuscripts do have the word "I" there. The better, the older manuscripts have "he" and so the newer translations have chosen to go with the older manuscripts which are closer to the originals and choose to use the word "he" and therefore that pronoun harks back to the dragon in chapter 12 verse 17. So you have the dragon who is standing on the sand of the seashore. So as you embark on chapter 13 and introduce yourself to the coming Antichrist, you immediately see that his association is with the dragon who is none other than Satan, the great red dragon who is called the devil and Satan back in chapter 12 verse 9. This then introduces us to the ancestry of the Antichrist. He is the child of Satan. He is the devil's child. And we will note also that while Satan is firmly planted on the sand of the seashore, that is as he takes his place on the earth, he calls forth out of the sea which represents the abyss, this beast. A description of him, by the way, that I just read parallels the description of Satan himself back in chapter 12 verse 3. And I pointed out last time that therein is the family likeness that chose the ancestry of Antichrist as none other than Satan himself.

Now we noted also that it is important to mention that what you have described here in the beast is both a king and a kingdom. It is an individual and he is called "he" and Daniel refers to him as a man, and Paul refers to him as a man, the book of Revelation refers to him as a man. And yet he is a man who also rules over a conglomerate world kingdom that is described as ten horns and seven heads. And those, as we pointed out last time, simply designate the breadth and the strength of that kingdom. The horns represent kings. Horns are symbols of strength and power. And the horns are representative of kings. Ten of them simply represent all of the world of human power that will assist him.

I heard this week and I'm going to follow up on it, we'll discuss it more when we get to chapter 17 in Revelation, that there is an effort going on right now in the world to divide the world into ten regions. And, in fact, to illustrate what the article intends to say, the Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Canada and the United States and Mexico, causing free trade in this one part of the world will create one of those zones, or one of those regions. And so it is a possibility that as the world is divided into ten regions, those ten regions will constitute the symbolism of these ten horns, ten kings.

It is also possible, as I noted for you last time, that it's simply a symbolic number representing all the world of human power pulled together. It's not necessary to tie it only to the ten nations of the revived Roman Empire. There were more than then since Rome, in effect, ruled the world. And we know

that this kingdom will also be a worldwide kingdom.

It is from this group, this ten kings that the Antichrist will arise. If you read Daniel 7 verses 7 and 8 and then down in to verses 19 to 25 of Daniel 7 and I'll just briefly show it to you because I don't want to get caught up in Daniel, as I told you last week, it's easy to do that. But in Daniel chapter 7 you see how this Antichrist rises from this...this confederacy of all these monarchs. There is a description of a beast in verse 7, the fourth beast in an image that Daniel sees there and this beast also has ten horns. And verse 8 says, Daniel 7, "While I was contemplating those ten horns, behold another horn, a little horn came up among them, three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man uttering great boasts." Here comes the Antichrist and somehow he rises out of this world confederacy of kings and in so doing disrupts three of them.

Down in verse 19 and following you have a further description of Antichrist. If go down to verse 24, we won't read all of it, you see, "As the for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise and another will arise after them and he will be different from the previous ones and subdue three kings." So somehow he comes out of this world conglomerate represented by the ten kinds. He rises out and somehow displaces three of them. He begins to speak out against the Most High, wear down the saints and he does this for a time, times and half a time, that's three and a half years. So there Daniel is describing for us that out of this confederacy comes this individual.

Also as we noted last time, in Revelation 13 and you can turn back to it, this beast is described as having seven heads and those refer, probably to the seven different world governments of the past...Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and then the final kingdom. And I'll say much more about that when we get to chapter 17 where that very description of the seven heads is further described.

Suffice it to say that John comments about them by saying this, they are seven kings, five have fallen one is, the other has not yet come. And what he means in chapter 17 verses 9 and 10 by that is that when John is writing five of these have already come...Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece...one of them is, that would be Rome which was in power at the time of John, and one of them is yet to come, that would be the revived Roman Empire, the world empire under the Antichrist.

The point is then here for us in chapter 13 that this kingdom which this individual is synonymous with because he is the ruler of it, this kingdom embodies all of the satanic power and all of the demonic influence of all the evil empires of the day in which it comes, and all of the strength and power of all the Antigod and Antichrist powers of the past. All of the worst of Antigod, Antichrist power and influence from all of human history clear to that very moment is summed up in this accumulated wickedness and force and power of this kingdom, consummated in this one great individual. It is the consummate wicked world empire, carrying the accumulated evil of all the empires of the past and of

that very time itself and led by the consummate satanic king, the Antichrist.

Now I just say by way of a footnote, and I did mention some of this last time, there are many movements in the world today toward a single world. We talk about globalism all the time. That's very common, it's in the newspapers, the global village, the move toward unification of the world. It's a very difficult thing to pull off. There are people who are striving very hard to do it but there is that human depravity that even fights against, if you will, the purposes of Satan. And I don't know if you think of it that way, but it works that way. Satan would like to orchestrate a one-world government over which he has perfect and complete control, but he can't even get fallen humanity to cooperate. But extensive efforts are going on to create one-world globalism. Consequently we may expect increasing and less subtle promotion of one-worldism throughout our society from the highest levels of government to the classrooms of our youngest children. As the National Education Association has said, it is with...quoting..."It is with sobering awareness that we set about to change the course of American education for the twenty-first century by embracing the ideals of global community, the equality and interdependence of all peoples and nations and education as a tool to bring about world peace."

Now even forgetting for a moment the Antichrist, there are obvious moral consequences to finding one world. An integral part of the new global education is as Alan Bloome warns in The Closing of the American Mind, and I quote, "To force students to recognize that there are other ways of thinking," in other words, that's essential to globalism, "In order to establish a world community and train its members to be persons devoid of prejudice," end quote. Bloome's use of "prejudice," by the way, is tongue and cheek, for in the new community there can be no moral absolutes. It must, however, be labeled prejudice to suggest that one point of view might be right and another wrong, particularly with regard to religion. In other words, nothing is really right so nobody should have any opinion that is negative toward anything anybody believes.

The way to create globalism is to eliminate absolutes. Linda Falkenstein(?), for example, of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory says, quote: "Black and white answers probably never really existed, but the time is long past when even the myth can endure. Competent world citizens must act int he large zones of grays where absolutes are absent," end quote.

The most dangerous part of global education then will fall in the area of religion. It is especially in this area that the planners realize they must eliminate prejudice and they must introduce tolerance for all beliefs. By the way, the new curriculum in American public schools calls for teaching not religion which is forbidden, but teaching comparative religion which is a way of teaching tolerance of all viewpoints. Teachers, of course, can't even suggest that one religion might be wrong and another right, that would be against all the rules. One's choice of religion, after all, doesn't really matter since nothing is right and nothing is wrong. The concept that is now being called values clarification. It's going to be necessary to create globalism to eliminate dogmatism to eliminate truth. It's going to

come as it's coming right now through every means possible in the secular world.

And so, John sees this image of a one-world government to be embodied in this one individual. You remember also there are ten crowns, ten diadems on these horns, which again indicate the regal dominion and earthly sovereignty of this confederacy. And then also on the heads were blasphemous names. World emperors have often usurped divine titles as if they were God, majesty, you hear them ....His majesty, the King...High and mighty this and that...Holy and sovereign this fellow and that fellow. They even demand that they be worshiped as God, such as the Caesars, such as Nebuchadnezzar and many others. And so this will embody all the blasphemy, all the false claims to deity and all of the temporal sovereignty of all of the monarchs and rulers of the past. Antichrist and his kingdom will be characterized by blasphemy.

So enough of his ancestry. Let's go to point two, his authority, verse 2...his authority. "And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority."

Now as John is looking at this vision he looks a bit more closely and he sees that this particular beast, this monster that comes up out of the abyss with these ten horns and seven heads and ten crowns and blasphemous names, also bears the likeness of a leopard and a bear and a lion. It's a very complex beast. Through the years of studying prophecy, it's been kind of humorous to look at all of the attempts to draw this beast and there have many, many of them. But each of them in its most simplest form is an effort to sort of defy what could be drawn reasonably because of the complexity of it.

But what is this point of these animals? Well let me just show you what it is. And again we have to remind ourselves of Daniel chapter 7. In Daniel 7, I'm just going to point out to you verses 3 to 7 because this is where the same image is given. When Daniel had his vision and God showed him the four great world empires to come, which would be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, God then in Daniel 7 made those four world empires bear the image of animals, certainly the first three, anyway, as we shall see, that were common in the land of Palestine. And verse 3, "The four great beasts coming up from the sea, the first was like a lion, it had the wings of an eagle." The second in verse 5 resembled a bear. And the third in verse 6 was like a leopard. And then there are some other elements to each description.

But that is precisely the same three animals that are described in the book of Revelation. Now why does Daniel describe the Babylonian kingdom in the way that he does like a lion? Well because of its fierce consuming power. Why does he describe Medo-Persia as a bear? Well obviously because of its ferocious strength and might and stability. Why does he describe Greece as a leopard? Because it moves swiftly and rapidly across the earth, particularly under the conquering of none other than Alexander the Great. And so the images of those animals, which by the way were common in

Palestine...a bear and a lion, a mountain lion and a leopard. They give some dramatic emphasis to the character of the nations that are being shown to Daniel in the vision.

By the way, if you'll look at verse 7 again, there was a fourth beast, and this one is an indescribable one. It just says, "Dreadful, terrifying, extremely strong, with large iron teeth, devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet and it was different from all the beasts that were before it and it's the one that had the ten horns." That's Rome. So that parallels, doesn't it, the Daniel 2 image of the statue where the final form, Rome, was iron and it had the ten toes which are parallel here to the ten horns in this comparative image.

Now go back to Revelation chapter 13, we'll weave that in. Here we see again those same animals which were common to that part of the world, and I think that's why they're used. The leopard, the bear and the lion, but please notice, this time they are all embodied in the one beast. The power of Babylon in its greatness is there, the strength and stability, fierceness of Medo-Persia is there, the swiftness and the alacrity and speed of Greece is there. In other words, this final form of world government, a revived Roman empire, a final world empire that proceeds out of the old location of Rome to cover the globe embodies all the fierceness of all those prior world kingdoms.

One other interesting note, they're given in reverse order in verse 2. In Daniel it's lion, bear, leopard. Here it's leopard, bear, lion. And the reason is very simple, Daniel was going from Babylon to Medo-Persia to Greece because he was on the front end of it. John in seeing the image is going from where he is back from Greece to Medo-Persia to Babylon. And so they're simply placed in reversed order as John recites history looking at it from his viewpoint, Daniel recites it from his viewpoint before it happened, or while it's still in the form of Babylon. When Daniel described the world empires they were to come. When John describes them, they've already come and gone.

Now to everyone in the land of Palestine in Daniel's time and in the time of the writing of Revelation, these animals would combine all of the symbols of speed and ferocity and power and strength and tenacity and ravenous appetite and devouring, they would sum up everything that was wicked and evil and rapacious and vicious and frightening. And they are all embodied in this final form of world government, which was, in a sense, depicted by the Roman power which was in Daniel's vision in chapter 7 an indescribable beast even then, and it is equally indescribable here. That fourth beast, that unique one that doesn't have an animal name, was something beyond even an animal and here in its final form it is still beyond that though it encompasses all of the worst of those beasts.

So John is looking at the consummate vicious frightening empire. Satan then who is the god of this world brings into one all the fierceness of the others, all the powers of dominion to form a world government to stop Jesus Christ. And it's all headed up in this one individual called the Antichrist.

Now go back to verse 2. "And the dragon gave to him his power and his throne and great authority." The weird and wild messiah of the devil, somebody called him, has great power. That's talking about sheer force. He really can't be halted. God steps back and lets him run amuck. And there is no human element to stop him.

You say, "What about the holy angels?" They're called off. The Lord Himself lets them run their gamut. Not only do they have force but throne, that's regal dominion. They're absolutely in charge. This is not just a rebel army, this is not a coup being pulled off from the ranks. These powerful, powerful, demon spirits who have infested the world have immense power and they wield it from regal dominion. And then he says, "And great authority." That is they have a right to act, they have freedom to act, they have no accountability, they have no restraint, no one is stopping them from doing anything that they want to do. It's not like now. It's going to be during that time that Paul describes in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 when the one who hinders, who restrains steps back. And all restraint is gone. Remember now, all the demons of the universe are on the earth for the first time in human history. Out of the pit they've come, freed from their bindings at the Euphrates, the two hundred million and the ones in heaven cast down to the earth. They're all here and they're all free to act and God restrains absolutely nothing.

And at the same time they're creating their fury and harming people and killing people, the first batch of them that come out of the pit can only harm, the next wave of them can kill. And at the same time God is wreaking havoc by pouring out the fury of a collapsing universe on the heads of those in the world. The holocaust is unimaginable.

Some people always ask, and I think it's a legitimate question...what is the circumstance that allows this man to rise? How does he rise to this place of power? And I would just remind you that there need to be certain conditions to make this happen and I think we're right there, as I said in the very beginning, people want a man, they're looking for a leader. A dictator never thrusts his rule upon the people from the top down without some provocation. And inevitably a man rises to this kind of rule because of chaos. When the chaos gets so bad and there are no answers and no solution, you have the perfect situation for leadership to develop. That is true in any kind of leadership. Leaders are born in the crisis. Leaders rise in the midst of the unsolvable problems. Leaders come to the top when there are no solutions. It is in the frightening and horrible chaos of the world that this man is able to rise empowered by Satan and sees authority in the midst of emergency. So successful will his coup be that men will be thrilled by his masterly genius and accept the principle that only an imperial form of government will be able to give them lasting peace. They'll chuck democracy. They'll throw aside their freedoms just for peace. This man will come on the scene at the beginning of the Tribulation and he will bring peace which tells us that before that happens there's going to be utter worldwide chaos. That would mean that when the church is taken out of the world, it will most likely be in a time of great chaos.

Think about Germany in the mid nineteen thirties, I don't know if you go back to that time in your history in the things you've studied, but if you do you would find out that Hitler didn't just pop up out of nowhere. He didn't come from the top down. He came from the bottom up. Why? Because people in Germany in the thirties were in economic despair. They were in spiritual despair. There was political chaos. They were experiencing economic depression. Small business were collapsing all over Germany one by one in every city. Millions of people were out of work. It was a desperate time and people were looking for somebody to lead them out. And Hitler knew the mood of the people and the strategy of the moment. Adolph Hitler started out as a lowly corporeal, worked his way up in the Reichstad(?) until he was at last in charge of everything. He emerged from absolute and utter obscurity to become the central figure in the world and himself demon possessed. From that position of power which he gained because of the chaos, he plunged the whole of Europe into his bloody reign of terror which was a preview of what it will be like on a worldwide scale when the Antichrist comes. One greater than Hitler will arise out of the chaos that will prevail in the world and be a man of marvelous appearance, transcendent ability and indescribable magnetism. The problem is, he will be possessed and indwelt and moved by a demon out of the abyss. He will have great authority. The world will give the authority for all of it into his hands.

So his ancestry and his authority, thirdly his acclaim...his acclaim. Verse 3, "And 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." And verse 4 says, "They worshiped the dragon." We'll talk about that in a moment.

How will he become god to the world? How will he get so much power? Well they're going to be amazed at him. It says right there, they're going to be amazed, astounded. And they're going to follow him. Why? Well it seems to be connected to the fact that one of his heads is as if it had been slain and his fatal wound was healed. What does this mean? Well the word "slain," here is the very same word used back in chapter 5 verse 6. John saw there a Lamb standing as if slain, and that's the Lamb of God. This empire, one of its heads is going to bear a mortal wound, or the evidence of a mortal wound. The scar that would indicate a mortal wound. Look down at verse 12 of chapter 13, the middle of the verse. "He makes the earth and those who dwell in it worship the first beast whose fatal wound was healed." Now there's the commentary on what this is. A fatal wound that was healed. Verse 14, the end of the verse, "The beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life." Chapter 17 verse 8, "The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss." And then verse 11, "The beast which was and is not is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven and goes to destruction."

Now all of this is telling us very clearly that this beast receives a mortal wound. It is said in chapter 13 verse 12 that it was the beast that was wounded, verse 14 the beast that was wounded, chapter 17 verses 8 and 11 the beast that was wounded. And here in verse 3 it says that one of his heads was

wounded. That leaves us with a bit of a difficulty. One of the heads had a mortal killing wound. What does this mean? Well, first of all, let me let you know there are two options to choose from. The first is that it refers to one of the kingdoms that was destroyed and comes back. If we interpret it that way then it would be that the head that was wounded would be the head representing what empire? Rome which would be the fifth, the one that...the sixth rather, the one that was when John was writing which was devastated and destroyed. The Roman Empire, you know, was shattered, but it comes back to life. And that is the amazing miracle, the revival of the Roman Empire. That is the thing which amazes the whole world that this man can rise to recreate this confederacy of Rome, this revived Europe, this new Roman Empire. And from the great power exhibited in the European Common Market, the European Coalition, the New Europe, from the evidence of his immense ability to lead there which is going to mean that he's got to bring together western Europe and eastern Europe, those things are already in motion, that he's got to reconstitute that territory that once was the heart and soul of the Roman Empire. When he proves that he can do that, their amazement over his ability to accomplish that and to revive that once killed empire is going to cause the amazement of the world and therefore cause them to fall at his feet and simply say, "If you can do that there, have the world, will you? Take over all the rest."

That's very possible as an interpretation. What makes it somewhat difficult, it makes a lot of sense in verse 4...3 rather to interpret it that way because it's just one of the heads that's been slain, but when you go to those other passages you have the individual himself being slain. And then you have him coming up out of the abyss. Now where did we start this chapter? Well we started it with the devil standing on the seashore and this beast coming up out of the abyss.

Here's another option, that the Antichrist goes through the first part of the Tribulation and is killed. And he at that point is a great world leader, but he comes back and he comes back to life only when he comes back to life he's more than a great world leader. He is now empowered by a demon from the abyss.

Whether it is the revival of the old Roman Empire and the man's ability to pull together the terrible discordant countries of Europe, which by the way seem to me to be fracturing more every day we live. We talk about a unified economy in Europe and a Euro-dollar, and they're all over there shooting each other. And it seems to be escalating. And if he can pull all of that together, that may constitute the amazement because of the reconstituted Roman Empire. Or it may well be that this individual deceives the world in some fake death. I actually have a hard time believing that this man will actually die and be raised from the dead because Satan can't do that. But I don't want to say it can't be done because if God chooses to do it, it can be done.

Now it does tell us in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 that the Antichrist will win the world over because of his power and his signs and then this, his lying wonders. His power, his signs and his lying wonders. Will there be some kind of an assassination of this world ruler who has reached the apex of power

and then some kind of a resurrection? There's no evidence of that. There's no description of that.

Some people have said through the years that they think it's going to be a resurrected Judas. Well why do they say that? Because Judas is also called son of perdition in John 17:12 and that's the title of Antichrist in 1 Thessalonians 2:3. But frankly, folks, that could be a title given to any unbeliever.

Others say, "No, it's Judas because he's the only man called diabolos." John 6:70 Jesus said to him, "One of you is a devil," that's the only man he ever called a devil. And also Luke 22 says Satan entered into Judas. But that's all conjecture. Satan could enter into anybody. Satan entered into Ananias and Sapphira. And what would be the point of a resurrected Judas? Nobody would know it was a resurrected Judas because nobody knows what Judas looked like. That wouldn't be anything.

Furthermore, I believe that the resurrection, if it does occur, has to occur at the halfway point, not the beginning. So whoever this guy is he has already immensely gained power in the world so much so that he's useful to bringing peace at some level in the very first of the seals that's opened in Revelation 6. We see him conquering and bringing peace. And perhaps that's where he begins to show the tremendous ability that he has as he unifies the Roman Empire in Europe and it is that capability that causes the world to fall at his feet. And then indeed perhaps on top of that, there is some kind of a satanic ruse pulled off whereby he supposedly rises from the dead. We will, of necessity, speak more about this.

If you look at verse 14 maybe you'll get a little better insight into it, that the false prophet who comes alongside the beast deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given to him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. But notice that he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given to him to perform in the presence of the beast. Maybe one of the deceptions is that this individual is back to life, who knows whether it's real? It could be fabricated in many ways. Nobody else could do it. Stephen Spielberg could.

So, there's going to be amazement and it's going to bring him worldwide acclaim as he rises, as it were, from the dead and demonstrates his ability to bring back a whole empire. This has a potent effect. The whole earth was amazed, fascinated. And he will immediately become the idol of the world. Attractive, brilliant, charming, glib, strong, handsome, astounding powers, they are so traumatized and so enamored with him that they follow after him...they follow after him.

Paul describes something of that following. It says, "They follow after him...in 2 Thessalonians 2:10...because they didn't receive the love of the truth so as to be saved, and for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false." Maybe what is false is that resurrection. But they believe it because they reject the truth and he becomes the recognized leader of the world.

So his ancestry, his authority, his acclaim, would you believe there's another "a" in here? His adoration, verse 4, his adoration. Fascination turns to worship. It's one thing to follow a man, it's something else to assign him deity. Verse 4, "And they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast and they worshiped the beast, saying, `Who is like the beast? And who is able to wage war with him?'" Yes, fascination turns to worship.

In fact, 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says that the Antichrist takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. He is not content with acclaim, he wants adoration. He is not content with respect, he wants reverence. He is not satisfied to be hailed and heralded, he wants to be worshiped. And so in verse 4 the witless people who will not love the truth of the gospel so as to be saved are deceived to the point where they literally worship this man as if he were God, and in so doing verse 4 says they worship the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast and they worshiped the beast. Reversing that, they worship the beast and in worshiping the beast they would up worshiping the one who gave his authority to the beast, namely the dragon. They become a worldwide group of Satan worshipers.

Do they know it? Some may, some may, probably most don't. I don't think this is talking about in the end time there's going to come worldwide overt Satan worship. I think what it's saying is there will be worldwide worship of this man which in effect is Satan worship. Some of them may truly worship Satan, but I think it's along the line of 1 Corinthians chapter 10 where Paul condemns the Corinthians for their engagement in any of the idol feasts that were going on in their culture because he says the things the Gentiles sacrifice to their gods, they sacrifice to demons. They didn't realize it but they thought they were worshiping an idol, they were really worshiping a demon and so it is here. These people who think they're worshiping this man are really worshiping Satan because he's the one who gives all the authority to this man. And that worship, by the way, is really the enterprise of the false prophet who is the cohort of the beast. He'll be introduced to us down in verse 11.

Go down to verse 12 for a moment. This second beast who comes out of the earth rather than the pit, he exercises all the authority of the first beast and what does he do? He makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast whose fatal wound was healed. His job is to make the whole world worship this man. That's his task. Over in verse 15, "There was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast that the image of the beast might even speak." Oh now we're getting a little deeper into this deception, right? Maybe what we have here is some kind of fake man that is only an image but somehow is given a voice so people think he's alive. But it is the task of the false prophet to make the beast believable as a resurrected God. And by the way, as many as do not worship the image of the beast are...what?...are killed.

So the worship is enforced by the second beast called the false prophet. He is further discussed in this book as we will see. And notice what they say, to show the complete and total devotion they

have to the beast, they say this, "Who is like the beast? And who is able to wage war with him?"

What is the significance of such a statement? Just listen and you will know. Listen to this, Exodus 15:11, just listen, "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?" Listen to Psalm 35 and verse 10, "Lord, who is like Thee?" Listen to Isaiah chapter 40 and verse 18, "To whom then will you liken God? Or to what likeness will you compare Him?" Verse 25, "To whom then will you liken Me? says the holy one." Isaiah chapter 46 verse 5, "To whom would you liken Me and make Me equal and compare Me? says God." One more, Micah, you know this verse, "Who is a God like Thee?"

Well what I wanted to do was just to give you a feeling for something that I could have given you three times more verses to illustrate. All throughout the Old Testament it has been common to say in worship to God, "Who is like You? Who is able to wage war with You?" And so what you have here is mocking language. What you have here is evidence of the blasphemy that is indicated back in verse 1. Basically what they're saying is you are God, you take over for God. And they are blaspheming God.

I believe also there's another little interesting note. The name Michael, Michael means "who is like God." So there's a sense in which they are playing off of Michael's name in a blasphemous way.

So, we see this beast, his ancestry, his authority, his acclaim, and his adoration. There's more to come, but that's for next time.

Listen, would you carefully? After studying all of this stuff for two weeks, you know, you get pretty sick of it. And I think that's part of the motivation I had in wanting to speak on the love of Christ this morning. I wanted to get away from this Antichrist to the true Christ. And as I was thinking about the true Christ who is to come in contrast to this horrible figure, I was so thankful to the Lord that I will meet Him, the true Christ, and not the Antichrist. And I was rummaging through some of my material and searching for something that might exalt Christ and I came across the words of that great preacher of the past generation, Joseph Parker. Listen to what he says.

"There are all kinds of people wanting to know about Jesus Christ. Philosophy calls in to see what He is. Kings pause a moment on their royal processions to ask questions about Him. And all kinds of poor people want to know where He is that they may speak to Him a prayer. In fact, such prayers have come from almost every door. And when they find Christ...says Joseph Parker...they find that His not a painted majesty, His is not a gilded dominion, His is not a great comet like blaze of transient splendor, it is a monarchy built on beneficence. It is thus Jesus will reign, not to destroy, not to kill, not to massacre." Joseph Parker says, "He will reign to help the poor and the needy, the woman and the child, the far off and the destitute, the misunderstood and the friendless. And He reigns not by force of chariots and multitudinous horses, not by the grandeur of His earthly state, but by that loving

sympathy which understands everybody. And ultimately...writes Parker...nothing can hinder Him putting on His head crown after crown until all other kings no matter who they are look petty beside His majesty."

Antichrist or Christ, who is your king?

Father, we thank You that our King is Christ. Even as we said this morning, we would desire to know the riches of Your surpassing grace that are ours in Christ. This wicked evil king to come who will deceive and destroy the world is not our king, Jesus Christ is our King. I pray that every heart here can say that, can say that without doubt and without question and without fear. And that some day our King will come for us and take us out of this world before the reign of terror of that king. And even those of us who will because they will believe in days ahead will have to suffer under his reign of terror will be preserved, their faith will not die. Some will enter into heavenly glory through his murderous power, others will be preserved to go into the kingdom alive. But this king cannot touch Your subjects, the subjects over which You alone are King. We thank You that You have made us Your subjects. And we do affirm as the revelation entitles You, You are King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and we submit to You joyfully and gratefully knowing all that You have promised us, in our eternal inheritance. And, Father, give us a sense of responsibility to the world around us, to reach out to them who are presently subjects of the monarch of darkness, Satan himself and may well be subjects of Antichrist if they don't come to know our Lord. Speak to their hearts, Lord, reveal Christ and draw them to Him. We pray in His name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).