

## Chapter 13

**V.1-4 The Description of the 1<sup>st</sup> Beast** There will be an antichrist and there will be an antichrist kingdom. There will be a false prophet who endorses, supports, and serves the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom. The antichrist is empowered by the dragon (Satan) from Chapter 12 and that is why it comes before our current chapter because that is how the antichrist receives his power and authority. In many ways these three individuals make up an unholy trinity as defined by the number 666. We will look at this further in the end of this chapter but there is a verse in Chapter 16 which describes this unholy trinity in the context of this study. "And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty." (Revelation 16:13-14) The 1<sup>st</sup> beast and the 2<sup>nd</sup> beast have been represented throughout history by different people and kingdoms but there will be a final antichrist and a final false prophet as indicated by Revelation, Paul, Jesus, and the Prophets.

We will also identify a harlot who partners with the beast in Revelation 17 & 18. We should also understand that there is a harlot and a kingdom of harlots called Babylon. These people and kingdoms are related but they should be understood to be separate as we will examine them in later chapters. For now, please understand that the harlot and Babylon are different and distinguishable from the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom. We know this because Revelation 17 tells us that the harlot partners with the beast and is seen riding on the beast in John's revelation. We also see in later chapters that eventually the beast will attack and discard the harlot and Babylon. (Revelation 17:16-17) That is enough background for now on the harlot and Babylon so that you don't confuse or conjoin the two with the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom. It is helpful for me to picture the antichrist kingdom as a spiritual kingdom and the Babylonian (harlot) kingdom as a physical kingdom. Although both kingdoms overlap with each other in form and function.

In Chapter 12 the good news was that there is a way to overcome the dragon (through the blood of the lamb, testimony of Jesus, and not being afraid to die). The bad news in Chapter 13 is that the way to overcome will often come through suffering, persecution, and martyrdom in the last days. The children of God in the end times are looking for a spiritual victory and not a physical earthly victory until Christ returns to reign. In the mean time we take comfort in finding our name in the Lamb's book of life and understanding our great need for endurance in the faith.

This is how we frame our approach to the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom as we begin to look at how this person is defined and the possibilities are for his appearance. The term antichrist is only mentioned four times in the Bible (1 John 2:18; 1 John 2:22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7) It is the most intuitive of all of his names though since it is clear and definitive that this man opposes Christ and is the opposite of Christ (antichrist). His other names depending on translations include the man of lawlessness, the lawless one, the son of perdition, man of sin, and as we see in Revelation – the beast. In his epistles John defines the antichrist spirit that has persisted ever since the ascension of the true Messiah. He indicates that the antichrist is defined by those who deny that Jesus is the Messiah and those who deny the proper relationship between the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22-23). He also indicates that any who deny that Jesus has come in the flesh also represent the antichrist (1 John 4:3 & 2 John 7). In

his epistles John speaks in generalities of how the antichrist thinks, speaks, or teaches but in the book of Revelation he specifically relates the characteristics of the first beast and the second beast with personhood. Therefore, it is appropriate to speak of an antichrist spirit, those who have embodied antichrist teachings, and a specific antichrist yet to come.

#### [Antichrist - Encyclopedia of The Bible - Bible Gateway](#)

The identity of the antichrist, the antichrist kingdom, and the false prophet are some of the most contested and difficult discussions in all of the book of Revelation. With that understanding I am going to try and present some of the more recognizable options although this list is not meant to be exhaustive. If anything, the disagreement in the body of Christ surrounding the identity of this individual should alert us to the uncertainties of our interpretations. Regardless of what interpretation you decide is most likely, it should certainly be taken with a grain of salt understanding that its final fulfillment may look different than it was imagined. Some people believe that the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom will be connected to the Roman Empire of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The primary reason for this is the connection between the fourth beast in the book of Daniel (Daniel 7:7-28) and the beast described here in Chapter 13. The fourth beast in Daniel is commonly understood to be fulfilled by the Roman Empire and the similarities to the two passages (Daniel 7:7-28 & Revelation 13:1-8) lead many to believe that the antichrist will be from this Empire. As an offshoot of this interpretation are those who believe that the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom will come from “spiritual” Rome or the papacy. This is largely the case because it is understood that the physical kingdom of Rome is no longer in existence so that the spiritual kingdom must be the one understood to be the end time fulfillment. Another prominent interpretation is that the antichrist will be Jewish because Jesus is Jewish and so it is assumed that his counterpart will also be Jewish. This is also perpetuated by the thought that the tribe of Dan’s exclusion in the 144,000 (Chapter 7) indicates the specific tribe that he will come from. There is also prominent belief that the 2<sup>nd</sup> beast who comes out of the land refers to the land of Israel and should be affiliated with Jewish heritage. Others believe this antichrist and the antichrist kingdom to be affiliated with the Islamic faith and the contemporary belief that they are waiting for a contemporary messiah called the Mahdi. A prominent number of Muslims believe that there will be a final Imam who will return to bring justice to the earth. The interpretation is that the returning Mahdi will be the antichrist. Others believe it will be another military or political leader like those types that have foreshadowed the antichrist in more contemporary times like Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, etc. The variety of possibilities reminds us to focus on what the Bible actually says and let the fulfillment be determined in time. Because of how the Bible describes the character and nature of the antichrist we should not expect to recognize him before he begins his boasting and attack on God’s people. We get the impression from the Bible verses that describe him that he will come on the scene quickly and suddenly and without warning. I picture the ministry of Jesus as the Messiah in the sense that it was supremely unclear to the human eye of Jesus’ nature and prominence before His public ministry. I imagine the antichrist to be very similar and that in the same 3 ½ years that Jesus served, and healed, and loved and ultimately saved the world the antichrist will hate, and war, and blaspheme, and destroy the world in that same amount of time.

As we study the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom, we do not have the time or space in this study to be more exhaustive in our information about the description of the ten horns, the seven heads, and the ten crowns. I will at least give you the pertinent Scriptural references which I believe tell us much about these horns, heads, and crowns but will leave that up to you and your

exploration. We may have additional space and time as we look further at these description in Chapter 17 but for now, please know that Daniel 7:7-28 seems to be describing the same or very similar person and kingdom that we are talking about here in Revelation 13. It is uncanny when you look at these verses and begin to see the similarities and relationships that seemingly overlap in their information. The other passage of Scripture which further defines the 1<sup>st</sup> beast (antichrist) and his kingdom is in Revelation 17:7-14. These verses are describing the harlot and the harlot kingdom which are riding on (partnering with) the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom. I believe it is appropriate and helpful to take these three passages and place them side by side as you study the antichrist and the antichrist kingdom.

**V.5-8 The Actions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Beast** If the first few verses describe the antichrist, then these verses tell us how he acts and it isn't pretty. #1 He has a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words #2 He exercises authority #3 He utters blasphemies against God, against His name, and against heaven. We get the idea that with #1 that he makes outrageous claims about himself and with this action he begins to accuse God. #4 He is allowed to conquer the saints #5 He is allowed authority over the whole earth. At this point his authority and power have grown to include every nation and people group. #6 Everyone worships him (except for those who are in the book of life). It's a pretty exhaustive list and very disheartening for the believer to come to the realization that in the end that this person will be allowed to have this type of power and control. It is disturbing indeed. We see that the utterances and blasphemies grow and so do his power and authority. The only consolations we get from this passage are the reminder that the antichrist's time is short with the indication of the 3 ½ year time frame again. And then we are reminded that regardless of his power and authority that he can't blot out names from the book of life – they have been there since the foundation of the world and there is no earthly power that can remove them.

**V.9-10 The Effect of the 1<sup>st</sup> Beast** The interpretation of these verses will be greatly affected by your view of the rapture. If you believe in the pre tribulation rapture then these verses are not nearly as troubling because they would only be applicable to what are often referred to as tribulation saints (individuals who come to faith in Christ after the rapture of the church). If you believe in a mid tribulation rapture (that hasn't happened in the Revelation timeline yet) or a post tribulation rapture then these verses are much more difficult because they would be applicable to the entire world-wide church. Either way they are oppressive and remind us that the antichrist will have total control of the earth at this time. There may be a few stragglers who escape to the mountains but the communication of these verses indicates that most are subject to two outcomes – captivity or death. We are reminded of the time of the Babylonian captivity in the Old Testament where God communicates the destruction of the people of Israel (Judah) through Jeremiah the prophet.

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go! And when they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’ you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: ‘Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword; those who are for famine, to famine, and those who are for captivity, to captivity.’ (Jeremiah 15:1-2)

These are difficult and troublesome words that remind us of the type of devastation that we should expect in the last days. The only encouragement that we get in this short section is that

endurance and faith will be required of the saints during the great tribulation. Jesus himself said that it will be the most troublesome time that the earth has ever experienced (Matthew 24:21) and He was not given to exaggeration. This is probably a great place to ask the question about why God allows such devastation and destruction even to His own people? It's a valid question considering the circumstances but we are reminded that Jesus' posture on the Mount of Olives is not one of rebellion but of understanding. He speaks matter-of-factly about what will transpire, provides warning about the future, and gives a glimmer of hope that immediately following this time of trouble He will return to make all things right. (Matthew 24:29-31) As we consider these questions it is a good reminder for us to look at what the Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians as he addresses the end of days.

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12)

Jesus tells us that there will be a separation of the sheep and the goats and this end time event will make it very clear who the sheep are and who the goats are. We are also reminded that for all those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life since the foundation of the world - they will remain there and that the only consequence of the antichrist's actions will be the purification of His bride. Those who are truly Christ's may go to captivity or the sword, but they will do so in the honor and respect of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and He will be there to welcome them home for all of eternity. Ultimately, we must understand that it is not about this life it is about eternal life. It is not about this kingdom it is about the eternal kingdom. It is not about this world it is about the eternal world. By the time that we get to this point in history God allows Satan his 3 ½ years of tribulation only to know that He intends to purify it with the seven last bowls and return with the New Jerusalem to a renewed creation where His Son rules from Mt. Zion.

**V.11-13 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Beast** Great, now there's two of them. As we already looked at from the verse in Revelation 16 (Rev. 16:13) this 2<sup>nd</sup> beast is also known as the false prophet. Some interpreters confuse the matter by imagining the 1<sup>st</sup> beast to be the antichrist kingdom and the 2<sup>nd</sup> beast to be the antichrist himself but whenever these two individuals are talked about together in other passages this 2<sup>nd</sup> beast is referred to as the false prophet. (Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10) We get the impression by his name and also his description (like a lamb) that he is religious. That is part of the confusion because people assume that if he is the religious one then he is the antichrist but according to the descriptions that we get in this chapter the antichrist will be a political or military leader and the false prophet will be his side kick. It makes sense when you remember the type of Messiah that the Jews and every other religion expects to come – one with power and authority who will take control through force. The antichrist will be the world's messiah and the false prophet will attest to his supposed validity through the religious community. Although it is very possible that the antichrist will be from the nations and without any affiliation with God's people it looks like the enemy's design will be to bring the two affiliations together of the state and the church through the activities of the antichrist and the endorsement of the false prophet. This means that the false prophet will most likely come from

one of three places – the protestant church, the catholic church, or the Jewish people. I could imagine any of these three being valid possibilities and just because the false prophet would arise out of one of these bodies of people does not condemn the entire group. We know that in Scripture that each of us will ultimately be judged according to our faith in Christ and not according to our religious affiliations. Whoever this false prophet will be and from wherever he comes - his primary role will be to bring validity and consensus to the antichrist's authority. We get the impression that that the antichrist is impressive and authoritative but with the false prophet by his side he becomes unstoppable. That is until God decides that his time is up. We also get the impression that these two individuals counter and eventually defeat God's two witnesses that He has established (Revelation Chapter 11). It is very clear that the entire world will be enthralled with them, their power, their abilities, and their dominance. Evidently the false prophet is given great abilities and signs in the presence of the antichrist and is even able to call down fire from heaven. His primary job assignment is to make the antichrist look good and make people worship him.

There is also verbiage in this chapter about some type of healing or counterfeit resurrection of the antichrist that I want to at least explore with you without providing a concise answer about this controversial topic. The first time we see something about this is in verse 3 (Rev.13:3) where it says "One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed..." Then we see in verse 14b "...telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived." Then to complicate matters even more in Chapter 17 it says something three times about the antichrist "that was and is not and is to come." Verse 8a "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit..." Verse 8c says "because it was and is not and is to come." And verse 11 says "As for the beast that was and is not...". All of these verses point to something unusual and dubious about the antichrist being injured and coming back to life again. There is widespread disagreement about what or who the antichrist is much less about what these descriptions point to. I believe it is enough to say that one of the signs that the false prophet will try to manipulate is the resurrection of the dead. It is highly unlikely that this actually transpires since only God gives life and Jesus has the keys to death and hades, but it may be possible that it appears as such to the watching world. Check out the following article for more information about this topic and happy studying.

[Will The Antichrist Be Killed And Resurrected? | The Christ in Prophecy Journal \(christinprophecyblog.org\)](http://christinprophecyblog.org)

**V.14-15 The Image of the Beast** If there is any section of this chapter that persuades me to think of the antichrist as a person instead of a kingdom only it is this portion where we see the false prophet making an image of the antichrist. In this account there is a vivid relationship to the image that Nebuchadnezzar made of himself and forced everyone to worship (Daniel 3). Of course, that is how three young Hebrew boys ended up in the fiery furnace because of their refusal to do so. The point is that people don't make images of nations – they make images of themselves. They make images to be worshiped not to identify power or prominence like you might think of with the Tower of Babel or even contemporary buildings that compete against each other for height and splendor glorifying man and nation. This image is not that. This is a representation of a human being – the antichrist. This is no ordinary image -according to this passage the false prophet evidently has the power to make it communicate, and cause death to those refusing to pay homage or take its mark. I don't think it is profitable for us to try and

establish how this will be or even what is literal and what is symbolic. The point is that the false prophet will orchestrate the creation of an image to be worshiped that represents the antichrist and this image will be imposing and powerful.

**V.16-18 The Mark of the Beast** This portion of Chapter 13 is one of the most infamous in all of Scripture partly due to its wicked topic, its ambiguity, and vividness. There is a lot about the mark of the beast that is unknown and highly disputed especially regarding the decoding of its intentions. But that does not mean that we should ignore the topic entirely because there are clearly some lessons to be learned about this portion of Scripture. The first question that one begins to ask when looking at this passage is 'who is the one causing everyone to be marked?' After all the translation in verse 16 says "*it* causes all...to be marked" What is the *it* or who? The closest reference is actually the idol and that would make the most sense with the impersonal pronoun "*it*". But I think we can understand from the context that the answer is all of the above. The antichrist, the false prophet, the image, and the dragon too are forcing people to take the name of the beast or the number of its name. It is very clear in the next chapter that the result will be eternal torment for all those who worship the beast, his image, or receive the mark of his name. (Rev.14:11) This is not to be discarded as symbolic language and before the time of the end according to multiple passages of Scripture there will be an opportunity for people to take or refuse the mark of the beast (whatever it may be). A couple of notes here. One is that people should not be unduly afraid of receiving the mark in some nefarious undertaking. We are to understand this as a clear opportunity to receive or reject much like we might understand salvation. The enemy can no more force you to take the mark of the beast than God will force you to receive His precious gift of salvation. But we should also be clear that the options will be much more severe and final because it will be take it or die. In that moment we must be prepared as the people of God that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God and that God's grace will cause us to endure in the face of such pressure. We should not be afraid that we either won't know it's the mark of the beast or that we will be forced to take it without our consent. The enemy doesn't have the right to force anyone beyond their own volition regardless of the horrific options that may be surrounding us. Unfortunately, those who refuse the mark of the beast appear to be the exception not the rule and whether it is a desire to stay alive, get another meal, sleep in a warm bed, or they are in wonder of his power - it says in numerous places that the whole earth will follow the beast. (Rev.13:3,8) Those who are the Lord's children though will recognize His voice and they will not follow the voice of another. They will be alert to the miraculous signs and wonders and keen to the ultimatums of taking the mark of the beast. God's children will know not to be infatuated by the man behind the curtain and the miraculous power that is demonstrated for all to see. They will know that it is not really Jesus because they will know from their Scripture readings that when Jesus comes back everyone will know it and He will come on the clouds for everyone to see. They will overcome by the blood of the lamb, by the testimony of Jesus, and by not being afraid to die. They will be able to tell that these miraculous signs are motivated by evil, self, and pride by the words that are spoken and the credit that is taken instead of given to God. God will not share His glory with another and anyone who tries to take it is a counterfeit and a thief.

Let me close this portion with some encouraging words about Christ since our study is the "Revelation of Jesus". Even in Chapters 12 & 13 we see the revelation of Jesus shining through to remind us that any absence of His presence or counterfeit replacement is only temporary and His time will come. One of the most interesting passages about information regarding the

antichrist potentially comes from Daniel 7:7-27 and amazingly in this passage of Scripture we get a glimpse of what the Ancient of Days is doing during the antichrist's activity.

“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.” (Daniel 7:9-10)

The next thing we see in Daniel is that the beast is killed, its body destroyed, and he is given over to the fire. We mustn't worry. God is in complete control. He is seated on His throne waiting for the time of judgment and when court convenes and the books are opened that's a wrap. There is no struggle or prolonged war – 2 Thessalonians 2:8 says that Jesus will kill the lawless one with the breath of His mouth and he will become as nothing. Revelation 19:15 says “From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.” That's it – all it takes is one verse and He wins. There is no resistance, opposition, or escape. The dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet will have their little time of trouble but it shouldn't trouble you if you fix your eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.