

## THE REVELATION TO JOHN

### THE THINGS FUTURE, REVELATION 4 - 22

#### EXPLANATORY PROPHECIES, REVELATION 12 - 14

- This section is another parenthesis in which those who play important parts in the tribulation are introduced. The people include a woman representing Israel (12:1-2); the red dragon representing Satan (12:3-4); the male child representing Christ (12:5-6); the archangel Michael representing angels (12:7-12); the offspring of the woman, representing Israel (12:13-17); the beast out of the sea, the world dictator (13:1-10); the beast out of the earth, the false prophet (13:11-18); and the judgment by the Lamb (14:1-20).
- Grant Osborne, *Chapters 12–14 are the third and final interlude tracing the church's involvement in the action of the three judgment sets, this time showing the war between the woman/church and the false trinity (the dragon and the two beasts).*

#### INTRODUCTION

- The work of Satan in the last days is now carried out by his emissaries, the beast out of the sea (13:1-10) and the beast out of the earth (13:11-18). The beast out of the sea, the future world dictator, is aided by the beast out of the earth, the false prophet.
- Charles Ryrie, *The Beast has already been introduced in 11:7, but now his person and work are described more completely. Though there have been many antichrists throughout church history, this is the great and final Antichrist who is still to come (1 John 2:18).*
- Thomas Constable, *John also received information about Satan's chief instruments: the Antichrist and the false prophet, through whom he will pursue his goals during the Tribulation. He recorded this information in order to enable his readers to identify these individuals and to respond properly.*
- John Walvoord, *In the first ten verses of chapter 13, a character is introduced of central importance to the events of the great tribulation. This passage is first of all a revelation of the revived Roman Empire in its period of worldwide dominion, but more especially this paragraph directs attention to the evil character who exercises satanic power as the world dictator.*
- William Barclay, *The general meaning is this. Satan, thrown out of heaven, knows that his time is short and is determined to do as much damage as he can. To cause that damage on earth, he delegates his power to the two beasts which are the central figures in this chapter.*

#### THE FIRST BEAST: REVELATION 13:1-10

- A. The emergence of the first beast (1-2)
1. An introductory identification of the first beast.
    - a. Charles Ryrie, . . . *the Beast is not only a kingdom but also an individual ruler. He is a man. This is known from 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Matthew 24:15, where he is an individual - not a kingdom - sits in the temple of God.*
    - b. John Walvoord, *This passage is first of all a revelation of the revived Roman Empire in its period of worldwide dominion, but more especially this paragraph directs attention to the evil character who exercises satanic power as the world dictator . . . The stage of the empire depicted by the beast is the period after the emergence of the little horn, the future world ruler, displacing three of the horns (Dan. 7:8). The description fits the time of the empire during the great tribulation . . . Many have said that the beast refers to some character in past history, but the context clearly refers to the final three and one-half years before Christ's second coming. Under the control of this central ruler in the Middle East during the Great Tribulation will be 10 nations (cf. Dan. 7:24, "The 10 horns are 10 kings").*
    - c. Charles Swindoll, *The vision of the Beast is drawn from specific images in the book of Daniel in order to communicate the reality of this end-time dictator. In Daniel 7 the great prophet had a vision of four beasts rising up from the sea—the first like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a four-headed leopard, and the fourth "dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong" with ten horns (Dan. 7:3–8). These four symbols corresponded to Nebuchadnezzar's earlier dream of the four metals of the statue (Dan. 2). Bible scholar J. Dwight Pentecost rightly interprets these four beasts of Daniel for us as the successive empires that opposed Israel in the ancient world: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. If we add up the number of heads and horns on the four beasts in Daniel 7, they equal the seven heads and ten horns of the Beast in Revelation 13.*

- d. Mark Hitchcock, *I believe it's best to view the beast as both the empire and the emperor - the kingdom and its king. What I mean by this is that the ruler of this final empire so embodies the kingdom that he is the empire - in the same way that, in the Old Testament, we could say that Nebuchadnezzar was Babylon . . . Rather than try to find some figure from the past and force that person into Revelation 13, it's best to follow the early church and relate this prophecy to an individual who is still future - a person who will rule the world during the Great Tribulation.*
2. A brief description of the beast (1-2a), ***And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth.***
- a. *a beast rising out of the sea . . .*
- 1) Charles Ryrie, *In this vision he arose "out of the sea," which many understand to be a symbol of the masses of people (17:15). But perhaps his origin out of the sea simply distinguished him in the vision from the second beast, who arises out of the land.*
  - 2) Gregory Beale, *... people in Asia Minor thought of whatever came 'from the sea' as foreign and whatever came from the land as native . . . Roman ships literally seemed to be rising out of the sea as they appeared on the horizon off the coast of Asia Minor.*
  - 3) John Walvoord, *The fact that the beast comes out from the sea indicates that he is a Gentile, for the sea of humanity is involved as his source (cf. Rev. 17:15).*
  - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *From one of them, Satan will bring forth his "Super Leader," the man we call "Antichrist." Up to this point, Antichrist has headed a ten-nation European league; but now he is about to embark on a new career as Satan's world dictator.*
- b. The beast's appearance
- 1) *ten horns and seven heads*
    - a) Charles Ryrie, *The Beast heads a kingdom, for the ten horns are identified as ten kings in 17:12, yet they are united in one Beast. In other words, he represents a confederation of ten nations. The seven heads are also explained in 17:9, as the seven hills of the city in which his power centers (Rome). They also stand for seven Roman rulers, of which he is the last.*
    - b) Thomas Constable, *The blasphemous names reflect the beast's antagonism to God (cf. vv. 5-6; 2 Thess. 2:4) . . . This beast is evidently the Antichrist who will be the head of a future empire (cf. 13:8, 18; 17:8). No past governmental entity is similar enough, to what John described here to qualify as the fulfillment of this empire. The beast embodies the malevolent forces operative in this empire. He will be the personification and deification of secular authority . . . John received more information about the identity of these heads, horns, and diadems in chapter 17.*
    - c) Grant Osborne, *This beast has "a blasphemous name" on each head, depicting his blasphemous claim to deity and desire to supplant God as an object of worship. These names allude to the titles of deity ascribed to the emperor under the imperial cult, such as "lord," "savior," "son of god," "our lord and god.*
  - 2) *like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth*
    - a) Charles Ryrie, *In the vision of Daniel 7 the first beast that the prophet saw was like a lion, the second like a bear, and the third like a leopard. Johns' Beast combines these features; whatever the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian empires had of strength, brutality, and swiftness will be present in this final form of Antichrist's world rule in the Western confederation of nations (or, as it is sometimes called, the revived Roman Empire).*
    - b) Thomas Constable, *This beast possessed qualities of three animals. They are perhaps the leopard's swiftness, agility, vigilance, craftiness, and fierce cruelty; the bear's brutality; and the lion's strength and majesty. In Daniel these animals represented three kingdoms that previously ruled the world. These kingdoms were Greece (Dan. 7:6), Medo-Persia (Dan. 7:5), and Babylon (Dan. 7:4). The fourth kingdom that Daniel described (Dan. 7:23) includes Antichrist's kingdom. The kingdom that the beast rules and represents seems to reflect his personal qualities.*
    - c) John Walvoord, *The beasts selected, as many have pointed out, are typical of the revived Roman Empire in the great tribulation, having the majesty and power of the lion, the strength and tenacity of a bear, and the swiftness of the leopard, so well illustrated in the conquest of Alexander the Great.*

3. The beast's authority came from Satan (2b), ***And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.***
  - a. Charles Ryrie, *Great as this man and empire will be, he is actually only an agent or tool of someone else. It is the dragon, Satan, who gives the Beast his power, throne, and authority. He is sold out to Satan, and Satan uses him to the maximum.*
  - b. Thomas Constable, *Antichrist will derive his power, throne, and great authority from Satan (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9). In contrast, Jesus Christ will receive these things from God the Father.*
  - c. John Walvoord, *In addition to these natural symbols of strength is the added factor of satanic power coming from the dragon, Satan himself.*
  - d. Warren Wiersbe, *Once Satan presents his great "masterpiece," the counterfeit Christ, to the world, what will happen next? [Read verses 3ff.]*

B. Adoration of the beast (3-4)

1. A mortal wound (3), ***One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.***
  - a. Charles Ryrie, *In 11:7 he was seen as coming out of the Abyss, and that coincides with his restoration to life here. He apparently actually dies, descends to the Abyss, and returns to life on earth. No wonder the world will acclaim him.*
  - b. Mark Hitchcock, *All Christians agree that only God has the power to resurrect the dead. This is a given. However, God can allow Satan to have the ability if he chooses to do so. I believe that's what will happen during the Tribulation. God's permission for Satan to do this will be part of the great delusion God will send upon those who reject Him (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12) . . . Based on the clear language of Revelation, I believe that the Antichrist will actually die and come back to life in a striking parody of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This astonishing event will happen at the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation and will coincide with Satan being cast out of heaven and having but a short time left to wreak havoc on the earth (Revelation 12:12).*
  - c. John Walvoord, *The revival of the Roman Empire would then be its miraculous healing. Another plausible explanation is that the final world ruler receives a wound which normally would be fatal but is miraculously healed by Satan. While the resurrection of a dead person seems to be beyond Satan's power, the healing of a wound would be possible for Satan, and this may be the explanation. The important point is that the final world ruler comes into power obviously supported by a supernatural and miraculous deliverance by Satan himself.*
  - d. Charles Swindoll, *Some have said the wound refers metaphorically to the kingdom of the Beast—that he will suffer a "deadly" political blow and survive. The Greek phrase translated "as if it had been slain," however, is the same expression used to describe the Lamb of God (i.e., Jesus) in 5:6, whose death was clearly real and resulted in a literal, bodily resurrection. This suggests that the Antichrist of the future will attempt to mimic Christ's death and miraculous resurrection through his own deceptive injury and resuscitation.*
  - e. Warren Wiersbe, *Is it possible that Satan will (with God's permission) resurrect a man from the dead? If Satan has power to give life to a dead idol (Rev. 13:15), could he not also give life to a dead body? . . . it would be difficult to understand how a kingdom could be slain by a sword. It is best, I think, to apply this prophecy to individual persons.*
2. Worship of the dragon and the beast (4), ***And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"***
  - a. Charles Ryrie, *The "whole earth" of verse is qualified by verse 8. Those whose names are written in the Book of Life will not worship him, but all others will . . . Worship means acknowledgment of worth, and the worth people acknowledge in the Beast is twofold: his uniqueness ("Who is like the beast?") and his might ("Who is able to wage war with him?").*
  - b. Charles Swindoll, *The one who "disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) will provide the world with a copycat "christ" to match all their man-centered ideals of personality, politics, and power. No wonder the whole world will be swept off its feet by this attractive, persuasive figure (13:3)! In fact, we are told the world will worship the dragon through their worship of the Beast. In this rabid fit of hypernationalism that will make Hitler's Third Reich look like a high school sporting event, the world will cry out, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" (13:4).*
  - c. Warren Wiersbe, *Not only will there be wonder, but there will also be worship (Rev. 13:4). Worship is the one thing Satan has always wanted (Matt. 4:8-10), and he will receive it through "the beast." The second "beast," described in the last half of this chapter, will organize and promote the worship of Antichrist, making it the official religion of the world!*

C. His activities (5-8)

1. Blasphemy (5-6)

a. His blasphemies will last forty-two months (5), ***And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.***

- 1) Charles Ryrie, *He is not only a political ruler, but he seeks to exert religious domination too. His mouth speaks great things and blasphemes against God (Dan. 7:25) . . . All of this activity, however, is directly under the control of God. His ability to make war is permitted by God, and all his power is limited to forty-two months.*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *God (cf. 6:4, 8; 7:2; 9:5; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32) will give authority to the beast to act as he will during the Great Tribulation, the last three and a half years (42 months) of the Tribulation.*
- 3) John Walvoord, *The evil character of the world ruler of that day is shown in his boasting and blasphemy. A similar description of the same character is given in Daniel 7:8, 11, 25. His authority continues for forty-two months, again the familiar three and one-half years of the great tribulation . . . His role as world ruler over all nations, however, does not begin until the time of the great tribulation. From that point, he continues forty-two months until the second coming of Christ terminates his reign.*

b. He blasphemed God and all who serve Him (6), ***It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.***

- 1) Charles Ryrie, *He will blaspheme the name of God, the dwelling place of God (His tabernacle), and those who dwell in heaven (the saints who will already be there).*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *He will blaspheme God by claiming to be God (2 Thess. 2:4) . . . Antichrist will speak against God and God's dwelling place, His heavenly tabernacle (Dan. 7:25). The phrase "those who dwell in heaven" defines the tabernacle in terms of its inhabitants, namely, believers who will be residing in heaven (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:22).*
- 3) John Walvoord, *It is evident that blasphemy is not an incidental feature of his kingdom but one of its main features, and he is described in verse 6 as blaspheming against God, against the name of God, and against the Tabernacle of God, as well as against them that dwell in heaven . . . As Satan's mouthpiece he utters the ultimate in unbelief and irreverence in relation to God.*
- 4) Warren Wiersbe, *Almost all dictators have risen to power by controlling people with their words. Some of us can recall when Adolf Hitler was rising to power, and know now how he mesmerized huge crowds with his speeches. Satan will make "the beast" a great orator, whose addresses will blaspheme God, His name, His tabernacle (heaven), and the saints in heaven.*
- 5) Warren Wiersbe, *Satan can do nothing without God's permission (see Job 1-2; Luke 22:31-32), so "the beast's" authority is delegated, not inherent. It will last for three-and-a-half years, the last half of the Tribulation.*

2. War against believers (7a), ***Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.***

- a. Charles Ryrie, *Further, the Beast will be allowed ("it was given," v. 7) to make war with the saints (cf. 12:17). "Overcome" indicates that he will kill them . . . Those who compose his army will serve him and make martyrs of God's people, who, though they give up their lives, are still within God's protecting care!*
- b. Thomas Constable, *Antichrist will make war with believers ("with the saints") on earth and will overcome them (i.e., kill them, v. 15) and will become a worldwide dictator (Dan. 7:21, 23).*
- c. Charles Swindoll, *He will direct his devil-inspired wrath toward the unprotected saints on earth. Unlike the first half of the seven-year tribulation, during which God's special servants enjoyed miraculous protection from the dragon's direct assault (11:3-6), the last forty-two months of the tribulation will be characterized by victory of the Beast over the saints (13:7). In fact, we should recall that the two witnesses, who will be protected during their ministry, will be killed shortly after the rise of the Antichrist from the sea (11:7). Their murder will mark only the beginning of a bloodbath of martyrs at the brutal hands of the Beast. No words can adequately portray the awful scenes.*
- d. Warren Wiersbe, *God will permit Antichrist to war against His people ("wear out the saints," Dan. 7:25) and even to defeat some of them. John prophesied that some of the saints will be captured and some will be martyred. But because of their faith, they will have patience, or endurance (see Heb. 6:12; Rev. 1:9), and will not deny the Lord in spite of persecution and death.*
- e. John Walvoord, *Acting as Satan's tool, the beast is able to wage war against the saints throughout the entire globe and to overcome them. (Cf. Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:10; Rev. 7:9-17.) In the will of God, many believers in Christ among both Jews and Gentiles perish as martyrs during this awful time of trial, while others are preserved in spite of all the beast can do.*

3. Worldwide authority (7b-8)
    - a. His rule will be world-wide (7b), **And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,**
      - 1) Thomas Constable, *No other ruler has ever been able to rule the entire world.*
      - 2) Leon Morris, *Incidentally this shows that something more than the Neronian persecution is in mind, for that was not world-wide.*
      - 3) John Walvoord, *Such authority was anticipated by Daniel (Dan. 7:23) where it is stated that the fourth beast "shall devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces." The dream of world conquest achieved in part by the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires is now for the first time realized completely and is the satanic counterfeit of Christ's millennial reign permitted by God in this final display of the evil of Satan and wicked humanity.*
    - b. Worship of him will be limited (8), **and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.**
      - 1) Charles Ryrie, *The Beast's authority extends to all peoples except those whose names are in the Book of Life. The phrase "book of life" occurs even times in Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8, 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19) and only one time elsewhere in the New Testament (Phil 4:3).*
      - 2) Thomas Constable, *Unbelievers around the world will not only serve Antichrist but they will worship him. The book of life of the Lamb evidently contains the names of God's elect (cf. Dan. 12:1-2; Eph. 1:4). Most, if not all, true believers will refrain from worshiping Antichrist (cf. Matt. 24:24).*
      - 3) John Walvoord, *Those worshiping the beast are the unsaved of both Jews and Gentiles in contrast to saved Jews and Gentiles whose names are written in the book of life . . . Only those who come to Christ will be delivered from the condemnation that is involved.*
      - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *The world's population will be divided: those who are saved, with their names in God's book, will not submit to "the beast;" those who are lost—the earth-dwellers—will worship "the beast" and do his bidding.*
      - 5) Note 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, *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.*
- D. An exhortation (9-10)
1. A call to pay attention (9), **If anyone has an ear, let him hear:**
    - a. Charles Ryrie, *Verse 9 is a call to serious attention. An important principle is about to be announced in verse 10.*
    - b. Thomas Constable, *God and John called on the readers of this book to hear (pay attention). Particularly those living at this time in the future will need to do so. Note that John made no reference to the churches as he did in similar exhortations in chapters 2 and 3 (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). This supports the fact that Christians (i.e., believers living in the Church Age) will not be present on the earth at this time (3:10). It is what comes next (v. 10) that this verse announces, not what has preceded.*
    - c. John Walvoord, *This instruction . . . is to anyone who will listen, and the message is not addressed to the church as such but to the entire world.*
  2. A declaration of God's sovereignty (10a), **If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.**
    - a. Charles Ryrie, *It is the principle of retribution. After all that has been said about the power of the Beast, verse 10 contains a word of great comfort. The captor will be taken captive; the killer will be killed. When God's purposes are finished through Antichrist, God will take him captive and confine him to the Lake of Fire.*
    - b. Thomas Constable, *God promised the saints that those whom He has destined for captivity (i.e., Antichrist, his followers, and some of the saints) will eventually end up as captives (cf. Jer. 15:2; 43:11). Those who kill people violently (v. 7) will themselves die violently (cf. Matt. 26:52).*
    - c. John Walvoord, *Reinforcing the exhortation is the warning of the ultimate sovereign justice of God which will be brought to bear upon this scene of wickedness . . . Those who persecute the saints and lead them into captivity must in turn suffer the righteous wrath of God.*

3. An encouraging word to believers (10b), *Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.*
- a. Charles Ryrie, *Knowing this brings the patience and faith that sustains those who endure these persecutions.*
  - b. Thomas Constable, *This assurance that God will execute justice should encourage the saints to persevere steadfastly and to trust God during this period of intense persecution and martyrdom (cf. 14:12).*
  - c. John Walvoord, *In this ultimate triumph and judgment upon wicked men lie the patience and faith of the saints in their hour of trial. The Scriptures frequently mention this final vindication (Gen. 9:6; Matt. 5:38; 26:52; Rom. 12:19; Gal. 6:7). The same truth which serves as an encouragement to the saints acts as a warning to their persecutors. Their ultimate doom is assured as in this case at the end of their brief period of power (Rev. 13:5; 16:6; 18:2–3, 5–8, 20; 19:20).*
  - d. Charles Swindoll, *Clearly, this persecution will require a level of spiritual stamina unparalleled in history.*

<b>SUMMARY</b>
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- Warren Wiersbe, *The world would not receive Christ, but it will receive Antichrist (John 5:43). The world would not believe the truth, but they will believe the lie (2 Thes. 2:8–12). Jesus spoke (and still speaks) gracious words of salvation, and men turn a deaf ear; but they will listen to the blasphemous words of “the beast.” The world will not worship the Christ, but they will bow down to Antichrist.*
- John Walvoord, *The purpose of Satan to take the place of God in this future great tribulation is the motivating power behind Satan’s activities today . . . In the great tribulation this purpose will be transparently clear, and after its manifestation it will be brought into divine judgment.*