

12 – THE TWO BEASTS & THE 144,000 (REVELATION 13:1-15:8)

Review:

A. The key verse (1:19)

- The key to understanding the book is found in Revelation 1:19

B. A basic outline

1. What You Have Seen (Chapter 1)
2. What is Now (Chapters 2-3)
3. What will take place later (Chapters 4-22)

C. A Basic Mindset

1. Don't be dogmatic about your interpretations.
2. Biblical prophecy only gives us a partial picture.

I. The Two Beasts (Revelation 13:1-18)

A. The Beast Out of the Sea (13:1-10)

1. The introduction of the Beast (13:1-2)

a. The beast out of the sea (13:1a)

- John sees a beast come out of the sea.
- The fact that the beast comes out from the sea indicates that he is a Gentile.

Biblical Note: The Beast (The Antichrist)

The title Antichrist can mean an enemy of Christ or the one who usurps Christ's name and rights. Most scholars believe the Antichrist will be the ultimate embodiment of what it means to be against Christ. In the last days, a man will arise to oppose Christ and His followers more than anyone else in history. Likely claiming to be the true Messiah, the Antichrist will seek world domination and will attempt to destroy all followers of Jesus Christ and the nation of Israel.

See: Daniel 7:8,20-25; 11:28-37; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12; Revelation 6:2, 13:5,7; 19:20; 20:10

b. The beast described (13:1b-2a)

- He is the ruler of a world empire.

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- The ten heads are ten nations or ten regional governments.
- c. The empowerment of the Beast (13:2b)
 - This ruler is empowered by Satan himself.
- 2. The fatal wound of the Beast (13:3)
 - The beast will suffer a mortal wound and it will be healed.
 - The world will marvel at his healing and will follow him.
- 3. The worship of Satan and the Beast (13:4-6)
 - a. Satan and the beast is worshiped (13:4)
 - The beast and Satan will be worshiped by people.
 - b. His role (13:5)
 - The beast will assume the role of God.
 - c. His blasphemy (13:6)
 - He will speak out and blaspheme the true God and His people.
- 4. The worldwide power of the Beast (13:7-8)
 - a. His war against the saints (13:7a)
 - The beast will be allowed to make war against the saints.
 - b. His authority over the world (13:7b)
 - The beast will have authority over the entire world.
 - c. The worship of the world (13:8)
 - All unbelievers will worship the beast.
- 5. The exhortation to hear (13:9-10)
 - a. The call to hear (13:9)
 - The writer calls us to pay attention to what has been written.
 - b. The call to depend upon God's providence (13:10)

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- The writer calls the readers to rest in God's providence.

B. The Beast Out of the Earth (13:11-18)

1. The introduction of the second Beast (13:11-12)

a. The beast out of the earth (13:11a)

- John sees another beast that comes from the earth.
- Some scholars feel that he is a Jew.

Biblical Note: The Second Beast (The False Prophet)

The second beast is the False Prophet whose task it is to point people to the Antichrist. In Revelation 13:11, he appears like a meek and gentle lamb when in reality he has the heart of a destroyer. The focus of the False Prophet is religion as he causes the world to worship the Antichrist. The False Prophet will have the power to perform great miracles. He will have the power to counterfeit the miracles of God, such as calling down fire from heaven. He deceives the people into building an image which can be used as a focal point for worship of the Antichrist. When Jesus Christ returns in his Second Coming, the False Prophet will be immediately judged with the Antichrist and cast into the Lake of Fire. See: Revelation 13:11-18; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10

b. The beast's power and authority (13:12)

- This beast receives his authority from the first beast.
- He causes the whole world to worship the first beast.

2. The miracles of the second Beast (13:13-15)

a. Fire from heaven (13:13)

- He causes fire to come down from heaven.

b. His deception (13:14a)

- He deceives the entire world with great signs.

c. The image of the beast (13:14b-15)

- He creates an image of the first beast that is to be worshiped.
- He has those who refuse to worship killed.

3. The Mark of the Beast (13:16-18)

a. The imposition of the mark (13:16)

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- The second beast has everyone receive a mark.

Biblical Note: The Mark of the Beast

The mark refers to the Roman use of a seal or mark connected with the emperor which conveyed official sanction. So the Beast will use such a mark to identify those who are loyal to him. Those without the mark will be deemed traitors and boycotted by the commercial system the Beast controls. Those without the mark will die from exposure or starvation or illness as a result of not being able to purchase what they need. Those with the mark will suffer as well (Revelation 14:9-11). Those who receive the mark will suffer the wrath of God in eternity.

See: Revelation 13:16,17; 14:9,11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4

b. The purpose of the mark (13:17)

- This mark allows people to buy and sell.

c. The number of the beast (13:18)

- The writer warns us to be aware of the significance of the mark.

Biblical Note: The Number of the Beast

The most complex issue regarding the mark of the beast is the number 666. Many observations have been made about this number. However, no one knows exactly what 666 means.

II. The Preparation for the Final Series of Judgment (Revelation 14:1-15:8)

A. The 144,000 on Mt. Zion (14:1-5)

1. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1)

- John foresees the Lamb surrounded by the 144,000 on Mt. Zion.

2. The song before the Throne (14:2-3)

- A heavenly group sings a song before the throne that only the 144,000 can hear.

3. The purity of the 144,000 (14:4-5)

- The 144,000 are marked by their purity and service for the Lamb.

B. The Message of the Three Angels (14:6-12)

1. The message of the first angel (14:6-7)

- The first angel brings an eternal message to the world.

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- The “eternal” message seems to be a message of God’s righteousness and judgment rather than a message of salvation.
- 2. The message of the second angel (14:8)
 - The second angel proclaims the fall of Babylon.
- 3. The message of the third angel (14:9-11)
 - The third angel pronounces judgment on the beast and those with his mark.
- 4. The sustaining nature of the coming judgment (14:12)
 - The coming judgment sustains the saints in their temporary troubles.
- C. The Blessing of the Faithful Saints (14:13)
 - A blessing is pronounced upon those believers who die in the tribulation.
- D. The Messages of the Second Group of Three Angels (14:14-20)
 - 1. The One on the white cloud (14:14)
 - John sees Christ on the throne with a sickle in his hand.
 - 2. The message of the first angel (14:15-16)
 - The first angel calls the One on the throne to harvest with His sickle.
 - 3. The second and third angel (14:17)
 - a. The second angel (14:17)
 - The second angel has a sickle in his hand.
 - b. The third angel (14:18)
 - The third angel calls the second angel to bring judgment with his sickle.
 - c. The actions of the second angel (14:19-20)
 - The second angel brings about a great slaughter with much blood letting.
- E. The Seven Angels Introduced (15:1-8)
 - 1. John sees the seven angels (15:1)
 - John sees another sign of seven angels with seven great plagues.

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2. The multitude (15:2)

- John sees the gathering of a multitude who have victory over the beast.

Biblical Note: The Multitude

There is a question concerning the identity of the multitude in Revelation 15:2. The scripture states that they have victory over the Beast, his image, his mark and his number of its name. Some scholars believe that the multitude are the choir of the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1-3. Scholars believe the multitude are the tribulational martyrs because they gained the ultimate victory over the Beast through their deaths.

3. The multitude's song (15:3-4)

- The multitude sing a song of praise to the Lord.

4. The introduction of the seven angels (15:5-8)

- John sees seven angels who are given seven golden bowls of wrath.