



Rev 13, The 1st Beast

December 22

REVIEW: [Revelation, pt. I¹](#); and [pt. II](#)

SERMON: [A sermon preached at the Toronto Baptist Seminary graduation service by Peter Gentry on Rev 13 \(1:11–1:52:29\).](#)

CONTEXT: There are many ways to understand the middle chapters of Revelation. On the subject of the 1st beast they would be: as referring to the past (some evil Roman Emperor), historical epochs (maybe Napoleon), the future (anti-Christ/man of lawlessness; or a political leader who works with the 2nd beast, a religious leader) or retakes on history (tyranny). As you saw last week I take the latter. Since apocalypse uses symbolism to convey truth I see the middle chapters as being cyclical vs. chronical. They give us retakes on history to help us understand our place in it like a field manual. In so doing it helps the saints to conquer and win their crown.

**These questions will follow one interpretation. Engage charitably with it while also charitably sharing your own views.*

FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP (The Gospel in Carols)

- Why is the backstory always necessary for understanding?
- Why do our cherished carols actually bring bad news and not good news to so many who sing them merrily?
- How do the Carols reflect the 4 Rs of the Gospel:
 - Ruined-
 - Rescued-
 - Response-
 - Renewed-
- How has this sermon helped enrich your understanding of the Gospel and of the carols?

READ: Rev 13:1–10

QUESTIONS²:

1. *In chapter 12 we encountered the dragon, Satan himself. How does he persecute the church? One way is through his beasts. (As the deceiver he often stays in the shadows lest we see him for what he is!).*
2. *The first beast is a terrible composite of the beasts (empires) described in Dan 7. As such it represents tyrannical governments. Sea= chaos/fear; horns= power, crowns=rule, mortal wound resembles the Lamb=a restoration of power, or its continual resurgence. The beast (tyrannical rulers) is a parody of Christ the King.*
3. How have governments been guilty of some of the most intense persecution of Christians? **Can you give any examples?**
4. **What is the portrait of the beast (vv. 1–5a)?**
 - a. Who gives the beast its authority?
 - b. Who does the beast worship and serve?
 - c. How does the beast view God?
 - d. What do people think of the beast?
 - e. What is the beast's relationship to the saints?
5. *V. 5b- This only lasts for a while, a "time, times and half a time" (or 42 months), again a reference to Dan 7. This appears in ch. 11 (a time to witness), ch. 12 (a time to be protected), and here in ch. 13 (a time of the beast's authority). I would see each as a reference to the New Covenant Age and not a chronological 10.5 years. **If this is so, what encouragement is it that God has placed a limit on such tyranny and persecution?***
6. *Rev 13 and Ro 13 would seem to be in contradiction. **Government is a good gift of God but how can said gift be perverted by Satan?***
7. *We think that democracy is a safeguard against the beast but even Hitler and Mugabe were elected! Trust in Jesus not democracy.*
8. *Vv. 7–8- Like the 6th seal, what will the beast be allowed to do?*
9. **Vv. 7–8 sound terrifying but what encouragement is it to know the believer's name was pre-written in the Book of Life?**

¹ Earliest authorities state it was John, the beloved apostle.

² For this study I continue to be indebted to a friend's commentary: Steve Wilmschurst, *Revelation: The Final Word*. UK: Welwyn Press, 2008.

10. What two things ought we to expect? How should Christians face these?

11. **BONUS:** *13:11–18, the 2nd beast appears as a liar. Skip down to v. 18, that number 666.* What is the number of perfection? What would God's number be? What would God, as triune, be? Rather than a code (like spelling the name Nero) or a literal mark (microchip), what would Satan's number be? In chs. 12–3 we find the dragon (Satan), the 1st beast (tyranny) and the 2nd beast (godless ideology). If their number is 666 they are the unholy _____. What would it mean to have their mark, something physical or to be like them or allied to them?

NEXT TIME: Last Life Group until the New Year, January 12, 2022